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ABSTRACT

Practical information and sample teaching activities for child caregivers who work with young developmentally disabled children in family day care settings are provided in this manual. Each chapter shares a typical experience a caregiver may have with a particular child. Chapter 1 focuses on getting to know a new child, initial expectations, and testing a new environment, with related activities such as following simple directions and learning sounds. Topics covered in chapter 2 include sensitivity to the child's changing needs, developmental stages, sequencing and repeating activities, and creativity, with related activities which include imitating sounds and giving objects. In chapter 3, the how-to's of designing and preparing for activities are described. Activities in chapter 4 (e.g., wheelbarrow walk, Simon Says) accompany a discussion of the meaning of play for children. Chapter 5 focuses on the creation and use of toys and spaces for play, with activities such as pointing to body parts and pushing objects. Discipline and setting limits is addressed in chapter 6, while the final chapter describes ways to include special needs children in group activities. Brief appendices include a summary of major points to remember, glossary of terms, developmental information, and organizational and print resources. (JW)

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# Children with Special Needs in Family Day Care Homes

## A Handbook of APPROACHES and ACTIVITIES for Family Day Care Home Providers

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# Children with Special Needs in Family Day Care Homes

## A Handbook of Approaches and Activities for Family Day Care Home Providers

Written by Beatrice de la Brosse

Illustrated by Teresa Margarita Navas

El Centro de Rosemount
Washington, D.C.

El Centro de Rosemount is a private non-profit child development organization dedicated to fostering the emotional, physical, social and intellectual needs of infants and young children. It has provided quality care for children for more than a decade. Rosemount is strongly committed to serve and advocate the interests of families of diverse backgrounds. Rosemount emphasizes the understanding and appreciation of crosscultural and humanitarian values in a bilingual setting; the maintenance of active community ties, and the development of opportunities for educational research that will ultimately enhance the fulfillment of these fundamental principles.

Un Buen Comienzo (A Good Beginning), conducted by El Centro de Rosemount, is a demonstration model program, offering day care and therapeutic services to young children with special needs.

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Jan Calderon Yocum

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# Foreward

*Children with Special Needs in Family Day Care Homes* represents El Centro de Rosemount's commitment to the belief that children with disabilities can be mainstreamed into the Day Care Community. We firmly believe that Family Day Care can and does provide to families and their children an environment that is loving and competent. We adhere to the principles of Early Childhood Development in multi-cultural, bilingual environments.

*Children with Special Needs in Family Day Care Homes* is the culmination of a three year grant from the Office of Education, Handicapped Children's Early Education Program. During that period we learned of the dedication of Family Day Care Providers to children, including children with disabilities. We learned that very little resources or encouragement was available to providers. Many have educated themselves, overcoming great hardships. We learned that parents of children with disabilities, who worked or were in training, were in desperate need of day care that could meet the needs of their children. Un Buen Comienzo brought the two together.

*Children with Special Needs in Family Day Care Homes* provides the learner with an opportunity to enhance one's knowledge of how children learn. It offers educational approaches and techniques in working with special needs children as well as activity ideas. It doesn't seek to provide a cookbook approach to "What do I do?" as a means of guaranteeing the operationalization of a fail-safe family day care home caring for children with disabilities.

The Board of Directors, Staff, Family Day Care Providers, Parents and Children of El Centro de Rosemount and Un Buen Comienzo wish all of you "Buena Suerte" (Good Luck) as you raise the quality of the children's lives who are under your care.

Jan Calderon Yocum

Jan Calderon Yocum
Executive Director
El Centro de Rosemount

# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Foreword

Introduction

**Chapter I: A child with special needs starts out in a family day care home.......................... 1**

Introduction.................................................. 2

Barbara and Yasar............................................. 3

Initial expectations.......................................... 4

The child tests his new environment........................... 6

Getting to know the new child with special needs............ 8

Looking at the child, not only the disability............... 10

Summary..................................................... 11

Activities.................................................. 12
- Activity 1: Understanding directions...................... 13
- Activity 2: Following simple directions................... 15
- Activity 3: Learning different sounds in the environment.................................. 17
- Activity 4: Vocabulary words.............................. 19

**Chapter II: Learning is fun for both the provider and the child with special needs................... 21**

Introduction................................................ 22

Sarah and Maria............................................. 23

Sensitivity to the child's changing needs.................. 25

Knowing what developmental stage the child is in........... 26

The values of sequencing activities and of repetition...... 28

Creativity and its rewards.................................. 30

The importance of success in the child's learning........... 31

Summary..................................................... 32

Activities.................................................. 33
 Activity 1: Imitating sounds............................... 34
 Activity 2: Feet to mouth.................................. 36
 Activity 3: Finger feeding................................. 38
 Activity 4: Giving objects................................. 40

**Chapter III: The how-to's of an activity**.................. 43

Introduction................................................ 44

Denise and Raul............................................. 45

Preparing for the activity.................................. 47

The activity should be short and simple..................... 49

Guiding the child with special needs through the activity... 51

Positive reinforcement...................................... 52

Summary..................................................... 54

Activities.................................................. 55
 Activity 1: Sitting........................................ 56
 Activity 2: Rolling........................................ 57
 Activity 3: Crawling....................................... 58

**Chapter IV: A child's work is play**........................ 59

Introduction................................................ 60

Nhu-Anh and Tom............................................. 61

The meaning of play to children............................. 63

Children learn through play................................. 65

Helping children learn through play......................... 68

Summary..................................................... 70

Activities.................................................. 71
 Activity 1: Wheelbarrow walk............................... 72
 Activity 2: Obstacle course................................ 74
 Activity 3: Simon Says..................................... 75
 Activity 4: Ball rolling................................... 76

**Chapter V: The enjoyment of creating toys and fun places for children** 77

Introduction 78

Terry and Joy 79

Toys made from materials around the house 81

A toy can be used to teach more than one skill 84

Ideas for arranging your home 87

Arranging spaces for infants 93

Summary 95

Activities 96
- Activity 1: Putting things in and dumping them out 97
- Activity 2: Pointing to body parts 99
- Activity 3: Soaping hands 101
- Activity 4: Pushing objects 103
- Activity 5: Jello play 104

**Chapter VI: Discipline: Positive strategies** 107

Introduction 108

Jacob and Janine 109

Honesty with oneself when disciplining 112

Setting limits 113

Other pointers in dealing with behavior 114

Summary 116

Discipline techniques for planning and presenting an activity 117

**Chapter VII: Including the child with special needs in group activities** 119

Introduction 120

Dean and Maxine 122

An individualized approach 124

Ways to include children of different developmental levels....................................................127

Your attitude will affect the attitudes of the children.....130

Summary..........................................................133

Techniques for group activities..................................134

Approaches for different handicapping conditions...........136

**Summary** ......................................................139

**Appendix**.......................................................141

Summary of points to remember..................................142

How to use the activities.........................................146

Glossary of terms................................................148

Areas of Development.............................................150

Developmental milestones.........................................151

Some of the specialists and what they do.....................154

Resources........................................................156

Bibliography.....................................................160

# Introduction

- What do I do when a new child with special needs attends my Family Day Care Home for the first time?
- Will this child be able to learn?
- Can I teach him/her?
- How do I integrate the child into the daily activities with the other children?
- How can I help this child?

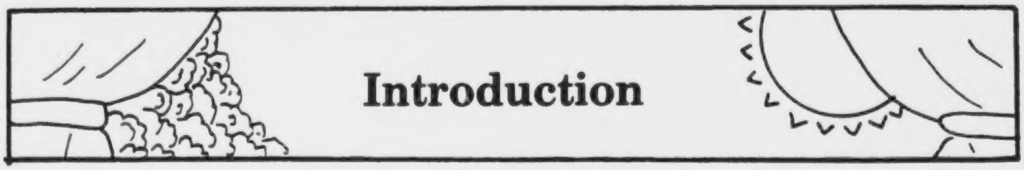
These may be some of the questions you ask yourself if you are considering placing a child with disabilities in your Family Day Care Home. Children with Special Needs in Family Day Care Homes: A Handbook of Approaches and Activities for Family Day Care Home Providers, will answer these questions and share helpful ideas and new approaches to working with children with special needs. It is the second of two handbooks written for Family Day Care Home Providers, who want to learn about working with children 0 through 4 with special needs. The first handbook, entitled, Children with Special Needs in Family Day Care Homes: A Handbook for Family Day Care Home Providers, answers some of the basic questions concerning special needs children and offers helpful information on observation, child development, steps for referral and strategies in building positive relationships with the parents. It goes hand-in-hand with this second handbook.

Each chapter in this handbook shares an experience a caregiver may have with a child with special needs. They are experiences which are common and which many providers who have worked with children with special needs in their home can identify with. Presented are a variety of situations a provider may encounter, trials and errors, solutions and what the provider learned from the experience. Included also are activities that were used with the children to help them develop new skills. These activities, as you will see, are simple and can be adapted to any child functioning at the skill level of the activity.

The purpose of this handbook is to show providers that working with children with disabilities is not difficult and that it can be a learning and rewarding experience. It does not intend to answer all questions concerning children with special needs, but to illustrate that a knowledge of child development and how children learn, and a sensitivity to children's needs will enable any dedicated provider to help these children grow in a positive way. It is based on the premise that the most important aspect in working successfully with children with special needs is what you as a provider add to the experience. Your openness, creativity, and sensitivity to the individual needs of each child and your patience and dedication to children are the qualities needed to ensure your success. It asks that you enter into a child's world in order to share with the child the challenges, joys, and rewards of learning.

# A Child with Special Needs Starts out in a Family Day Care Home

# 1



# Introduction

When starting something unknown or that you have never done before, it is normal to have doubts and uncertainties. Barbara, A Family Day Care Home Provider, had never worked with a child diagnosed as having a disability. She was somewhat doubtful when Yasar, a child with a speech problem, was placed in her home. Yet, Barbara tried not to assume what Yasar was like. She based her expectations of what he was capable of doing, on what she had observed him doing. It was Yasar's first experience in a Family Day Care Home. He was just as uncertain about his new environment. In this chapter you will learn how both Yasar and Barbara adapted to the new situation.

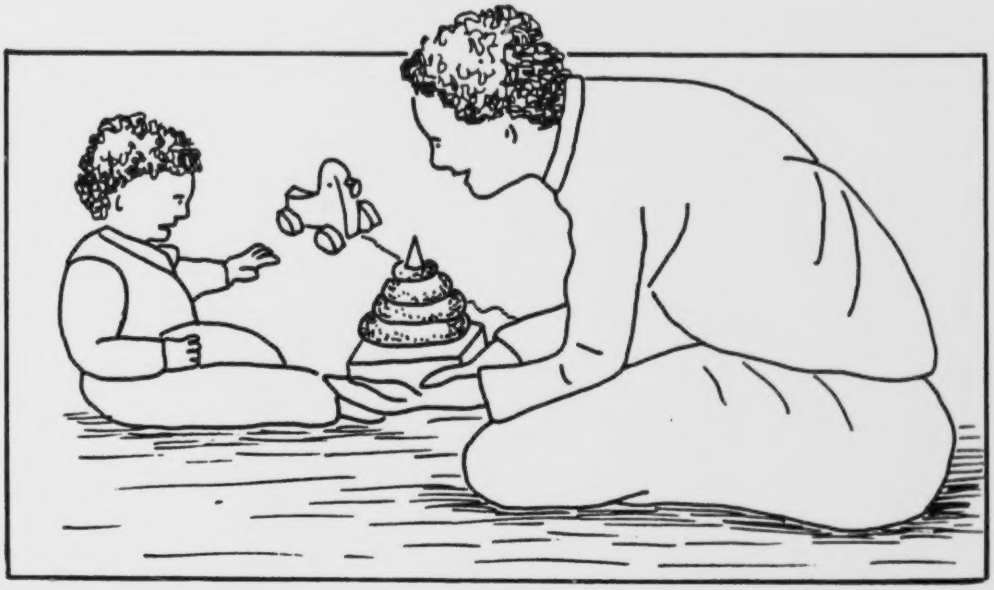
**When reading this chapter see if you can find the answers to the following questions.**

- What expectations should the provider have when a new child with disabilities comes into the Family Day Care Home for the first time?
- How can a provider make the new child with special needs comfortable in the new environment?
- How and why should the provider get to know the child from the very beginning?
- Why should one look at the whole child and not just the disability?

# Barbara and Yasar

Crossing the street the other day I heard a voice yell, "Hi, Barbara!" I looked up and on the other side of the street was Yasar, who is now 3-1/2, and his mother. He was holding a balloon in one hand and waving hello with the other. How confident Yasar looked!

My name is Barbara and I'm a Family Day Care Home Provider. I remember so clearly when Yasar first started in my home. He was 2-1/2 years old and had never been in a day care home before. That first day he looked so shy and unsure. I think I was a bit unsure myself. He had been placed in my Family Day Care Home because he had language problems and his speech therapist had recommended that he would greatly benefit from being with other children.



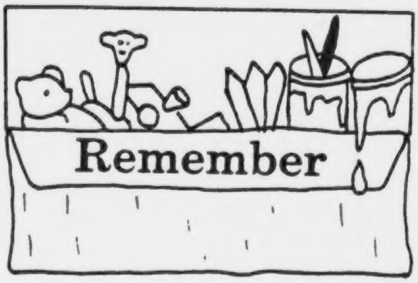
# Initial expectations

I was a bit nervous and scared when I first realized that Yasar was going to be in my Family Day Care Home. It was my first time working with a child who had a disability. I didn't know Yasar or what to expect. I had been told that Yasar had a language delay. Yasar's language skills were slightly behind what was considered normal for his age. From my experience as a provider, I had learned long ago not to assume anything about a child until I had spent some time with that child. I needed to play with, observe and get to know Yasar first.

Questions still popped into my mind. Would he be different from the other children? Would he be able to learn with me? I realize now that it was normal for me to question our future together. I understand that I should not allow my doubts and insecurities to interfere in my relationship with a child. I feel even more strongly that I was right in not forming an impression of Yasar before I met him. For as time went on, Yasar taught me that he was a child like other children and that, yes, both he and I would learn together.

I saw Yasar as a child, a child who just needed a little more from me. I realized that when we take care of children with special needs, we must be aware of our attitudes. Children sense our feelings even if we think we are hiding them. We must treat them as we would treat children without disabilities. We must develop realistic expectations of their capabilities.

- Get to know a child first before forming a total picture of the child.
- Fears and doubts are normal feelings when faced with a new challenge but these feelings need to be accompanied with honesty with one's self.
- Feelings and attitudes can affect one's relationship with a child.



# The child tests his new environment

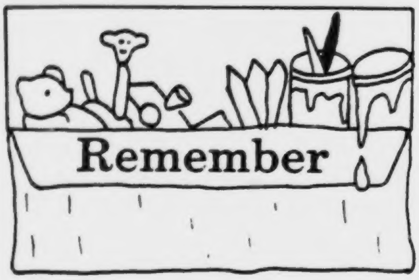
When Yasar first started he was very quiet. He preferred to play alone, away from the other children. He had never been in day care before, so it was a totally new and unfamiliar experience for him.

To help him in his transition into day care I asked his mother to accompany him on his first two days. He and his mother spent a couple of hours each day in my home. The first day I introduced him to a variety of toys to see what he might enjoy. At one time his mother wanted him to try a certain toy but Yasar resisted. I soothed the mother by saying, "It will come later. He needs to feel successful in his new environment. This way he can begin to trust me and all that's around him." By the third day he was able to stay without the presence of his mother. He would cry initially when his mother left, but he soon started playing and forgot his tears.

I wanted Yasar to feel comfortable in his new setting, therefore I made sure not to pressure him. At first he distanced himself from group activities and would frequently ask for my help. Slowly he began to explore the toys and the room with some mild encouragement from me. Little by little he adapted to the new schedule. He began approaching group activities and eventually involving himself. He began to follow the rules, to do more things for himself, and to make his own decisions without my help. He finally trusted his new environment, and I was happy to share his first success in a Family Day Care Home.

When a child starts in your Family Day Care Home remember:

- Be sensitive to the child's needs.
- Don't pressure the child.
- Allow the child to explore the new surroundings.
- Set the child up for success. Give the child activities he/she can do.
- Give the child time to build trust in the new environment.



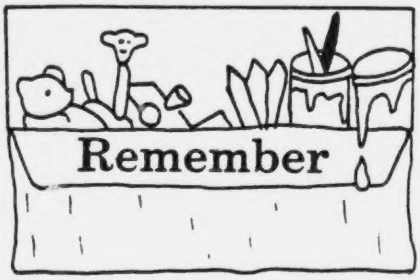
# Getting to know the new child with special needs

I knew that the best way to help Yasar was to get to know him. What did he like? What made him happy, interested or bored?

I would watch him from the corners of my eye to see how he would react to different situations. I took notes and observed him at different times of the day and in different activities. I learned how long he could concentrate on an activity, what distracted him and what motivated him. I also noted what things he could do and what things he hadn't learned. For example, I learned that Yasar understood his name and when I said "yes" or "no". He could show you his shoes and pants when you asked him and he could point to his eyes, mouth, hands and hair.

By observing and interacting with Yasar, I was able to plan appropriate activities for him. I knew how long we could spend doing one activity. I found out he enjoyed playing games such as pointing to his eyes, mouth and nose. He liked hand claps as reinforcement. I began with the games that he enjoyed in order to motivate him towards more challenging activities. I learned who Yasar was because I had taken time to observe him and to be sensitive to his "messages".

- Take time to observe children.
- Be sensitive to their needs.
- Plan your activities according to the needs of the children.

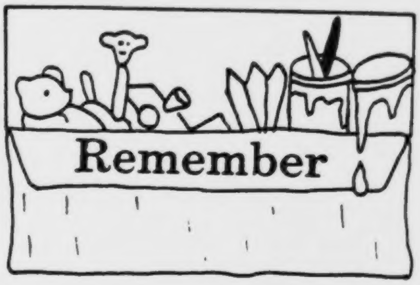


# Looking at the child, not only the disability

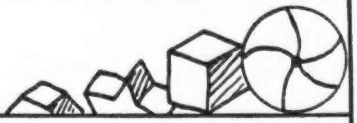
At first I was a little doubtful that I could really help Yasar learn. I thought it would be a lot of work but I soon saw that he was a child like all other children. I wasn't there to cure him, but to offer a positive and learning environment that would allow him to learn his way. I saw that Yasar was smart. I learned that all children learn at their own speed.

You love children with special needs as you would love any child. You give them a lot of love because you want them to feel secure and happy with themselves. When you see their little faces shine with pride, you too share their success.

- Children with special needs are children first.
- Children learn at their own speed.
- Your role is to offer a positive, enriching environment that will allow children to grow to their fullest potential.



# Summary



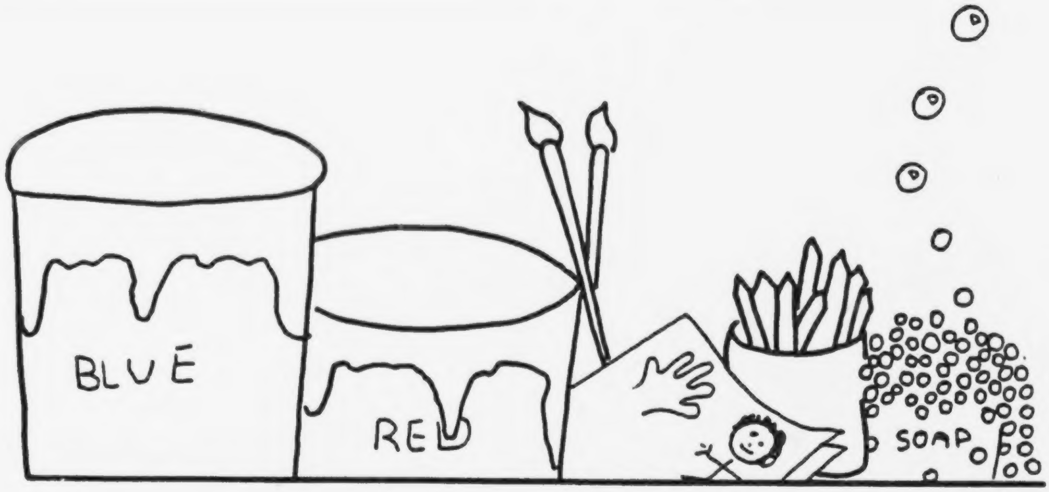
As we can see, a provider should not assume anything about a new child. She should take her time to observe a child in order to get to know him/her better. A new child should be given time to adapt to the new environment, and the initial duty of a provider is to make that environment comfortable for the child. The provider learns the needs of the child by observing in order to plan fun and successful activities. For this reason, when working with children it is important to see them as individuals with different needs. A child with special needs is a child first. What we mean by that is that one should look at the whole child and not primarily focus on the disability. You are not being asked to cure them, but to help them feel good about themselves by creating and ensuring stimulating and successful experiences for them.

# Activities

On the next couple of pages are some language activities that Barbara used with Yasar. They are simple activities that were appropriate for Yasar's developmental level. Because Yasar already knew certain parts of his body and enjoyed pointing to them, Barbara decided to begin with them. These activities started him on the path towards learning new words. These activities stimulate listening and speaking skills.

(Look in the Appendix for an explanation on how to use the activities in this handbook.)

**Notes:**



## Activity 1: Understanding directions

| | |
|---|---|
| **Area:** | Language (Receptive) |
| **Pre-requisites:** | The child should be able to identify at least five body parts. |
| **Purpose:** | To learn how to understand and follow directions. |
| **Materials:** | • The child's own body<br>• Pictures representing what you are going to ask the child to do (i.e. open your mouth, close your eyes) |

**Procedures:**

1. Select three body parts that the child knows and can identify (i.e.: eyes, hands, mouth).
2. Sit in front of the child and tell him you are going to play. Explain that you will be the teacher first and then he can be.
3. Give him a direction, for example, open his mouth. You model for him by opening your mouth.
4. Encourage the child so he will imitate you. Then give him the direction again, this time without modeling.

5. Do the same with the other body parts (i.e.: close your eyes, give me your hand, etc.).

6. Remember that every time the child does well to praise him saying, "good work," or by applauding.

**Suggestions:**

1. Using the pictures again, place them on the table and ask the child to imitate the picture you point to.

2. If necessary demonstrate to the child what you want him to do.

3. Point to each picture and encourage the child to do what each picture shows.

4. As the child develops more skills, tell him that he is the teacher so that he can give you the directions and you will do what he says.

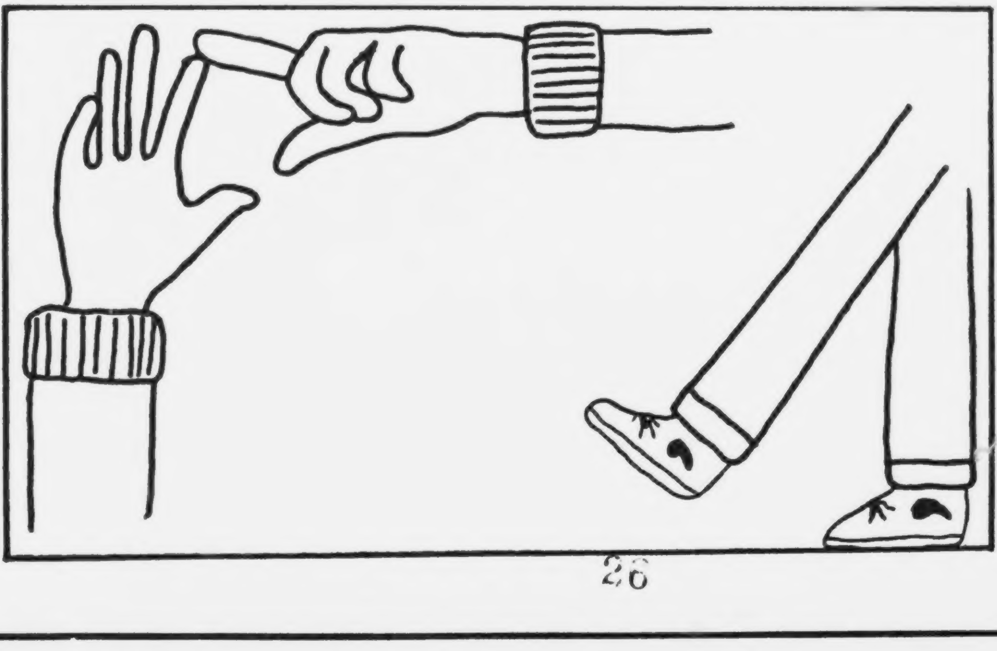
5. You then can take turns and let the child choose the picture and you imitate the picture.

6. If you have a group of children you can use the same procedures, asking them to take turns.

7. It is important that you begin with only two pictures and when the child or children do it well increase the number of pictures and directions to three, then four, etc.

**Multicultural tip:**

Include pictures that represent different cultures and ethnic groups.



## Activity 2: Following simple directions

**Area:** Language (Receptive)

**Pre-requisites:** The child should be able to understand simple directions and be able to point to different body parts.

**Purpose:** To understand simple directions, learn how to move his body according to to what someone asks.

**Materials:** None - only the child's body.

**Procedures:**

1. Begin by demonstrating to the child while saying the corresponding words, such as: "Look I'm standing, I'm sitting," while you stand, sit, etc.

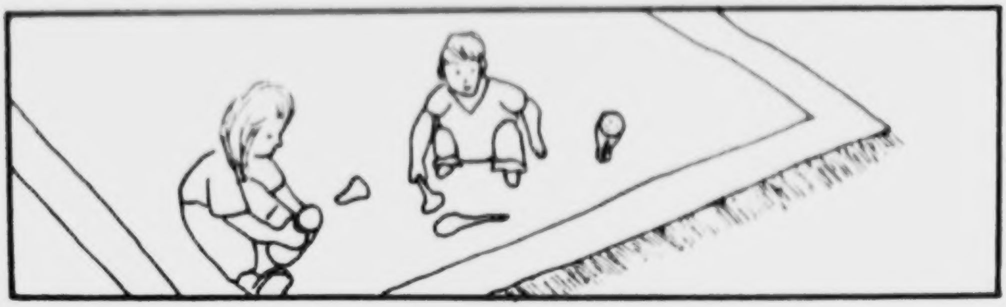
2. Then say the word, demonstrate and encourage the child to imitate you.

3. Examples of actions are: sit, stand, come, pick up, run, jump, eat, give me, take, clean, etc.

4. When the child has learned one direction, then go to another one.

5. Remember to praise him with an applause or "good job." This will encourage him to learn more.

6. Remember to keep the directions simple. Begin with one-word directions, i.e.: sit. Then when he does well go to two word directions, i.e.: sit here, run fast, etc. Then continue with more complex sentences, i.e.: clean the table, sit in the chair, give me the ball.

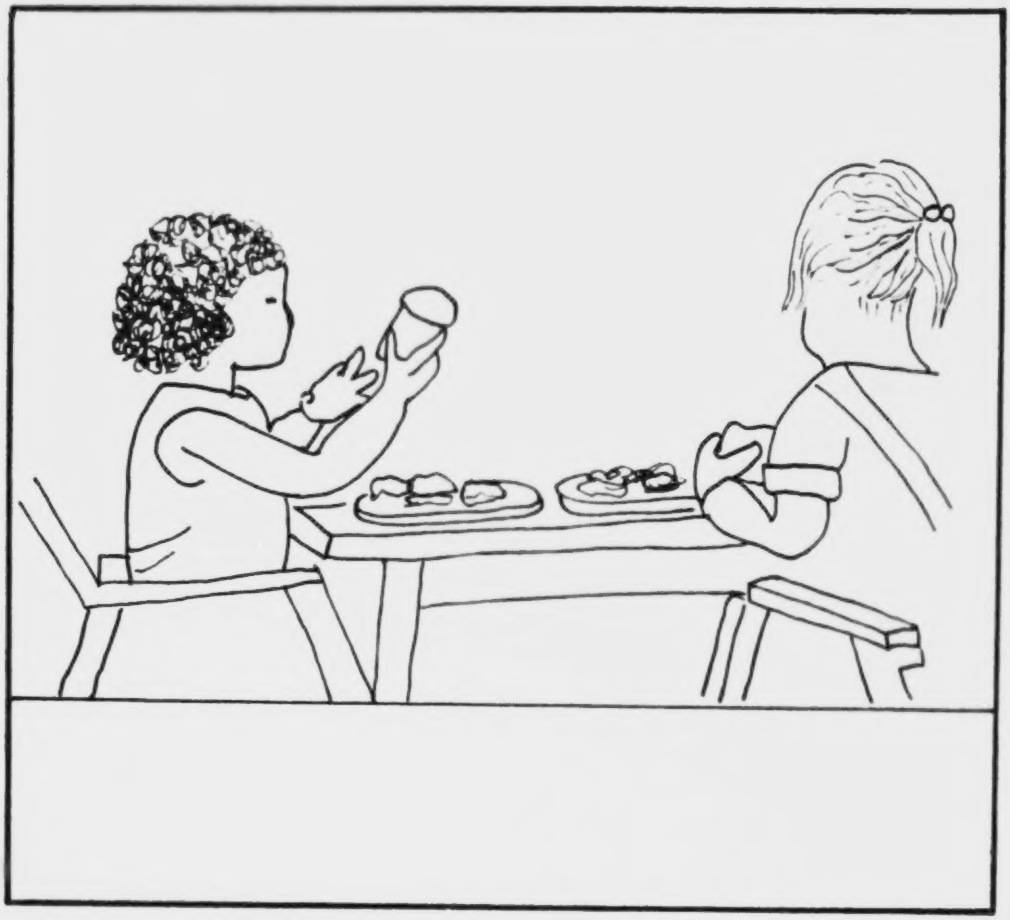


**Suggestions:**

1. If you have a group of children, there may be some children that already understand these directions. You can use them as models to demonstrate what you want to those who are still learning.

2. If you are working with a group of children you can give different directions to each child while the other children observe and applaud. The children will learn to take turns, pay attention, learn to wait, and learn to be involved in a group activity.

3. You can use this activity for transition times before lunch, snack, or going outside.

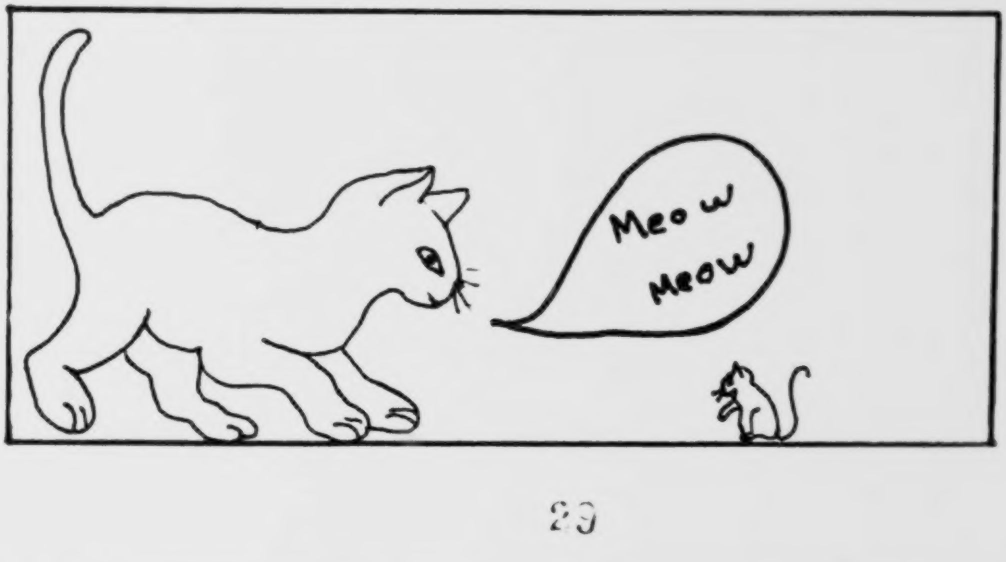


## Activity 3: Learning different sounds in the environment

| | |
|---|---|
| **Area:** | Listening (Receptive Language) |
| **Pre-requisites:** | The child should be able to localize the source of a sound by turning his head towards the sound. |
| **Purpose:** | To recognize and identify different sounds. |
| **Materials:** | • Objects around the house that produce sounds, such as: a telephone, door knob, keys, a door closing, a radio, etc.<br>• Magazine pictures. |

**Procedures:**

1. Select one sound such as a door closing.
2. Close a door in your home telling him to "Listen to the door closing."
3. Then ask the child to point to the door while you close it saying, "Show me what is making the noise." Remember to reward him with applause and words such as "very good."
4. Once the child has learned to do this activity you can reinforce what he's learned by asking him what he hears when a door is closed.
5. Follow the same procedure with other objects in the house.



**Suggestions:**

1. Each time an object makes a sound that is familiar to the child, ask him to point to the object and to the corresponding picture.

2. You can ask the child to imitate the sound (i.e.: the telephone - "ring ring").

3. Later you can follow the same procedures with the animal sounds. You can use pictures of the animals and make the sounds, asking the child to point to the corresponding animal. Later you can ask the child to make an animal sound, repeating after you (i.e.: cat, meow; dog, bow wow).

4. You can also develop this activity for a group of children. Remember that each child should learn to wait and listen to be called upon. Remember to reward each child when they respond appropriately.

5. Remember to begin with a few sounds and as they learn the sounds, add on new ones.

**Multicultural tip:**

If a child is from a particular culture, you can use objects and animals from his particular environment that he is familiar with.

## Activity 4: Vocabulary words

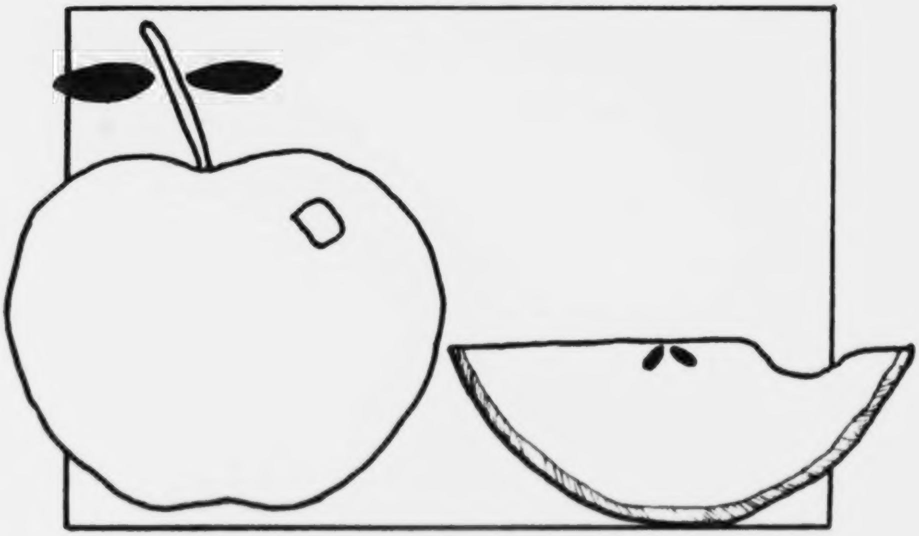
| | |
|---|---|
| **Area:** | Speaking (Expressive Language) |
| **Pre-requisites:** | The child should be able to recognize familiar objects (having touched them, played with them, shown interest in them). |
| **Purpose:** | Repeating the name of objects, imitating the adult. |
| **Materials:** | Objects around the house such as: fruits, animals, and furniture. |

**Procedures:**

1. Begin by selecting, for example, two fruits: grapes and an apple.

2. Show the child the fruit and say, for example:
   -Look, the apple is big.
   -The apple is round.
   -The apple is red.
   -This apple smells good.
   (Allow the child to hold and smell the apple.)

3. Now take the grapes and follow the same procedure. Describe them saying:
   -These grapes are small.
   -Look, they are green.
   (Let the child hold the grapes.)



4. Encourage the child after touching each fruit to repeat after you the words "apple" and "grapes."

5. If the child, for example, only partially pronounces the words, still reinforce the child in a positive way by saying, "good," and then repeating the word.

6. Each time the child repeats a word, reward him with an applause or affection and phrases such as: "Bravo," "Good job," "You said that very well."

7. Later you can cut the apple, describing the insides. You can do the same with the grapes.

**Suggestions:**

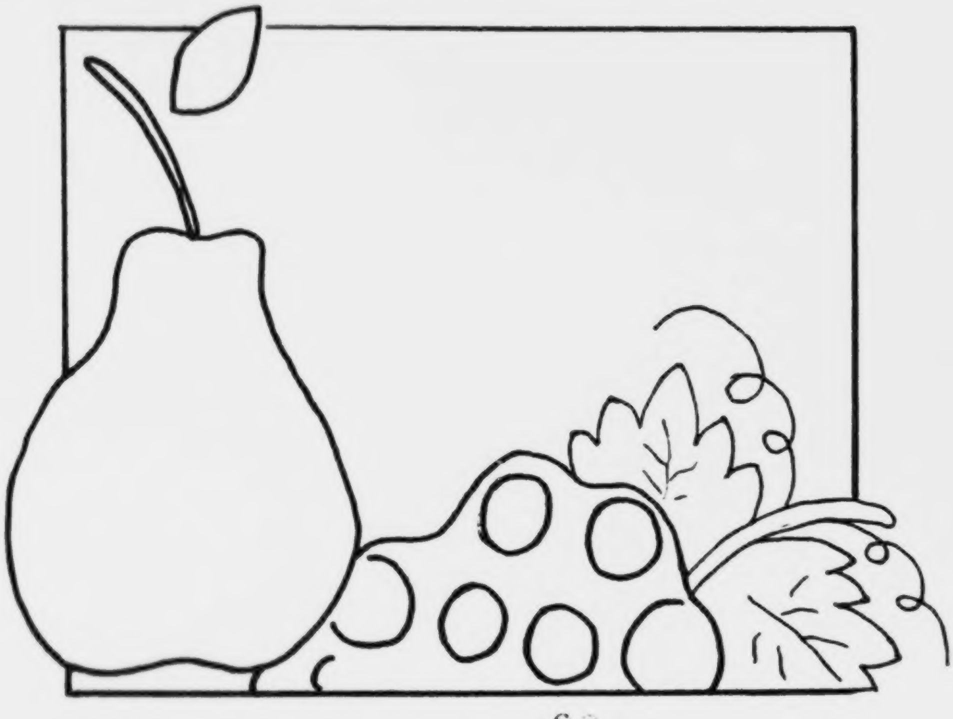
1. You can add fruits to those the child already knows, increasing his vocabulary.

2. You can do the same with furniture in the house, animals, food, etc.

3. If you have a group of children, follow the same procedure. Make sure that each child repeats the words at least twice during the activity.

**Multicultural tip:**

If a child is from a particular culture, you can use certain animals and fruits from his environment that he is familiar with (i.e.: pineapple, mango, etc.).



# Learning is Fun for both the Provider and the Child with Special Needs

## 2

# Introduction

Success in learning, no matter how small, is an exciting experience for both the child with special needs as well as for the Family Day Care Home Provider. Maria was developmentally behind other children of her age, but that did not stop her from learning, nor did it stop Sarah, her Family Day Care Home Provider, from finding new and entertaining ways to guide Maria along the way.

This chapter offers some basic concepts on learning and also provides information that Family Day Care Home Providers should be familiar with in order to provide positive learning experiences for children.

**When reading this chapter see if you can find the answers to the following questions:**

- Why is it important for the provider to be sensitive to the changing needs of a child?
- Why is it important to know at what stage a child is developmentally?
- Why are sequencing activities and repetition important to a child's learning?
- Why is setting a child up for success so important?

# Sarah and Maria

My experience with Maria started a year and a half ago. I'm no professional therapist but I always felt that I could help her. I based my work on love, patience and practice. The first time I saw Maria, I felt a great love for her, maybe because not only am I a Family Day Care Home Provider, but I'm also a mother who also had a child with a problem. I think I grew to be more sensitive to children's needs from my experiences with my own child.

When Maria started in my Family Day Care Home she weighed only 13 pounds, she was seven months old, and was developmentally behind children of her age. She could not hold her head up straight and she suffered from allergies and teething. These difficulties, however, were not going to stop me from helping her. For me, she was not a child who was different, but one that just needed a little more of my attention and care.

Maria's pediatrician had recommended that she receive therapy to help her along the way. As a result, an occupational therapist (a person that helps a child's motor development) and a special educator (a person that would stimulate a child's thinking and self-help skills) came to my home three times a week. They would not only work with Maria, but would also give me ideas on how to help her. They showed me simple exercises to do with her and activities to stimulate her thinking and self-help skills.

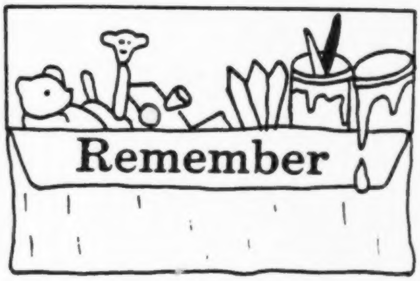
While Maria was in my Family Day Care Home, I learned a great deal from her and from the therapists.

## Sensitivity to the child's changing needs

Maria had spent a lot of time in hospitals. As a result, she could be very fussy with people working with her. She would cry, fight and resist. As time went on, she began to gradually adjust to me. It took a while for me in turn to adjust to her moods and needs. I quickly found out the importance of my being able to read her moods.

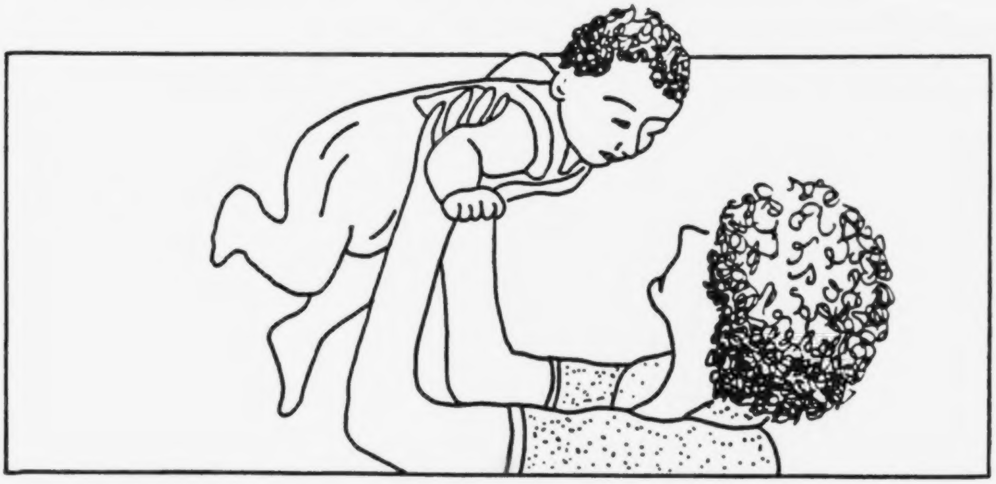
I learned how important it was for me to select appropriate times of the day to do my activities with her. If she were irritable or sleepy, those were definitely not appropriate times to play with her. If she were exceptionally motivated or curious with something else, I would take advantage of her curiosity and postpone the activity I had planned. If she were full of energy, we would perform an activity that used that energy, or if she was more quiet but attentive, then I would choose something more low key. When she was not ready for an activity, she would resist and, as a result, we would find ourselves frustrated or disappointed. I learned to be flexible and to read her "messages."

- When choosing a time for an activity remember to read the child's moods.
- Select the right activity whether it be active or low key.
- Select the right time to do the activity.
- Be flexible.



# Knowing what developmental stage the child is in

When I first started to work with Maria, I wasn't sure what she could do. I found out by trial and error. One day I decided to help her learn to hold an object in her hand. Since she still could not sit up I placed her on her back and dangled a small rattle for her to reach and grasp. She would look at the rattle, try to lift her arm and, in frustration, cry. I noticed she had difficulty lifting her arms while on her back. Then I tried something different. I put her on her side with her head propped on a pillow, in a comfortable position where she could easily look at the toy and reach out and touch it. I learned that her motor development, at that time, did not allow her to reach up while on her back. By gradually finding out what she could do and could not do, I learned what activities were appropriate for her.

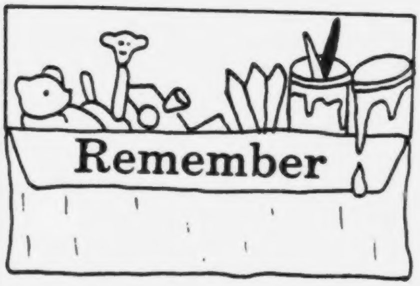


Can you imagine if I had continued putting toys where she couldn't reach them? We would have become frustrated and left the activity with a feeling of disappointment.

From this example with Maria, one can see how important it is to understand where a child is developmentally, and what a child is able and not able to do at the time. Ask yourself before starting an activity with a child "What skills does a child need to be able to do this activity?"

When planning activities for children remember to:

- Observe what stages the child is developmentally.
- Know what the child is capable and not capable of doing.
- Know what skills are needed to do the activity.
- Match the activity to the skills a child owns.
- If you do not know fully the child's skill level, don't hesitate to ask the therapist or parents for advice.



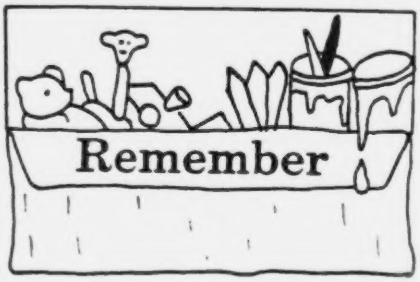
# The values of : sequencing activities and of repetition

When Maria finally learned to hold her head erect and to sit, it opened the door to a brand new world. She could see so much more of what was around her and it was exciting for both of us. She had mastered some important skills that allowed us to move on to more challenging activities.

The sequencing of activities is the process of starting with a simple activity and, once the child has mastered the activity, moving on to a more difficult activity. Maria had come a long way. She finally learned to reach and grasp an object. Before being able to do that, however, she had to master simpler skills, beginning with the simple task of focusing her eyes on the object. Once she was able to look at the object she had to be able to move her arm and hand towards the object. She then needed to learn to open her hand and grasp the object. These were all steps and skills she needed before being able to pick up an object. She would have to learn to drop and pick up the object until finally she would learn to take out and put objects into a container. Each activity demanded higher and higher skills. For Maria I had to break down the skills into small steps and to sequence the activities until she was able to place objects into the container.

Her mastery of these skills was not done in a day or even a week. It took a lot of practice and repetition. Children need to practice skills over and over again before they become second nature to them.

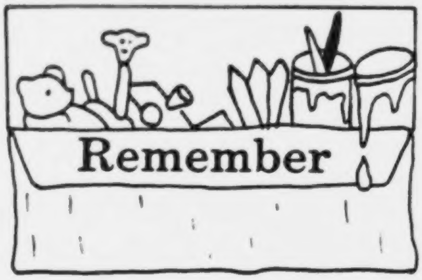
- Sequence your activities. Start with something simple and when the child is ready, move on to something more challenging.
- Break down the tasks into small steps.
- A child learns through repetition.



# Creativity and its rewards

One reason I enjoy working with children is because it allows me to be creative. I have learned to think as a child in order to create new ideas. Maria was a real challenge to me. I would ask myself, what can I do to motivate her? For example, I wanted her to imitate sounds that I made. What could I do to get her attention? I decided to put on some bright lipstick and then made funny faces. Maria loved it. She looked at me and laughed and slowly began imitating me. I had enticed her into learning. Children will respond so much more positively when an activity is presented in a creative and entertaining way. Simple lipstick and a funny face were the only tools I needed that day. I have retained what I learned from this experience and try to make each activity with all children as much fun as possible.

- Make learning fun and enticing.
- Use your imagination.

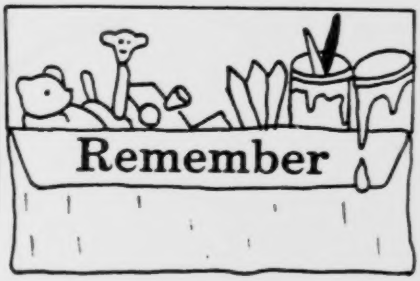


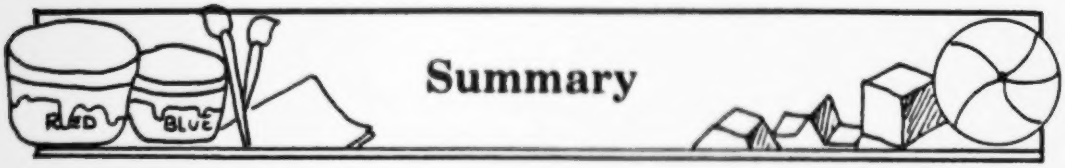
# The importance of success in the child's learning

Of all the things that I learned from my relationship with Maria, the most important was what success means to a child.

By understanding Maria's needs I was able to present her with successful experiences in learning. These activities were successful only because I knew what she needed. I began with activities that she could perform. Her first success motivated her to try more challenging activities. I chose the right times to play with her and I read her moods. I praised her and made the activities fun. These were steps that would allow her to succeed. Success for Maria built up her self-esteem. Through feelings of accomplishment, she became confident to try more challenging activities. To me that was the most important gift I gave to her.

Providing the opportunity for a child to succeed will add to a child's self-esteem and will give a child confidence to face new challenges.





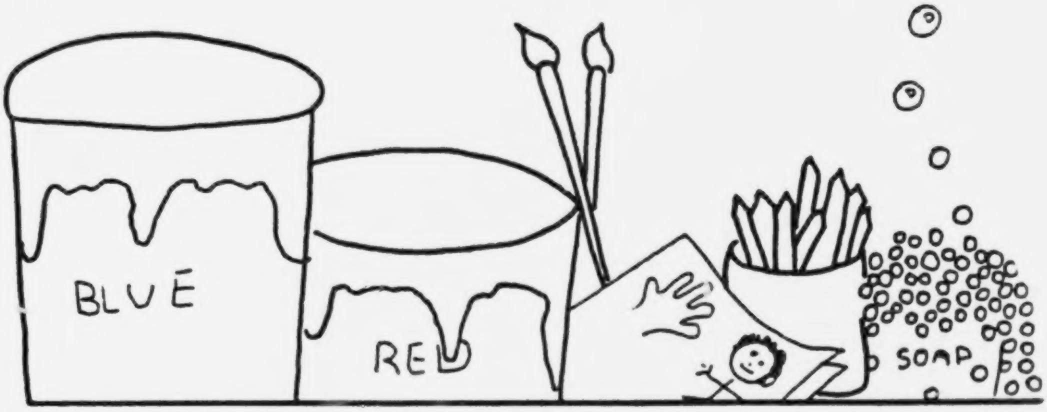
# Summary

As we can see, it is of prime importance that a care giver be sensitive to the needs of children; in that way she can better aid in the child's positive growth. One does not need to have a child with a disability in order to be sensitive to the needs of special children. It is an ability that develops with time and experience. By knowing the skills of a child, the provider can ensure that the activities she asks the child to perform will not frustrate the child, but help the child learn and feel accomplishment. Success for the child will push him/her forward and permit the child to try new and exciting tasks.

# Activities

The following are some of the activities that I did with Maria. They are for young children. Remember to know the skills a child needs in order to perform the activities and remember that these activities should be presented in an enticing way. They should stimulate movement and sound in a young child, prerequisites to developing more complex self-help skills.

**NOTES:**



## Activity 1: Imitating Sounds

**Area:** Talking (Language)

**Pre-requisites:** The child should be able to look at someone's face and mouth and move his own mouth the way that person does; to be able to make noises and to vocalize.

**Purpose:** To teach the child that she can learn by watching and imitating others; to teach her to copy sounds (later words).

**Materials:** Very expressive face; bright lipstick can help the child find your mouth.

**Procedures:**

1. With the child lying face up or sitting supported with her face to you, move your face to within 8 to 10 inches of her face and make noises with your mouth to get her attention. Open your mouth slowly, and wait for her to do the same. Smile at her -- she may imitate this more quickly. When she does, praise her and smile again.

2. Try another expression or movement with your mouth -- one she knows. When she imitates it, smile and tell her, "Good job!"

3. When she is imitating you in the expressions she knows, try one she does not know, and wait for her to imitate it. If she does, smile and congratulate her. If she does not, go back to the familiar expressions to get her imitating again, then try the new one again.

4. When she imitates expressions, start making simple sounds, such as "Ah," or "Oh." Wait for her to imitate. If she does, smile and tell her "Good talking!" If she does not, make the sound again and wait. If she makes no sound, go back to some expressions. If she makes any sound, smile and congratulate her. Repeat this step, building up the number of sounds she can imitate. Soon she will be ready for simple words.

**Suggestions:**

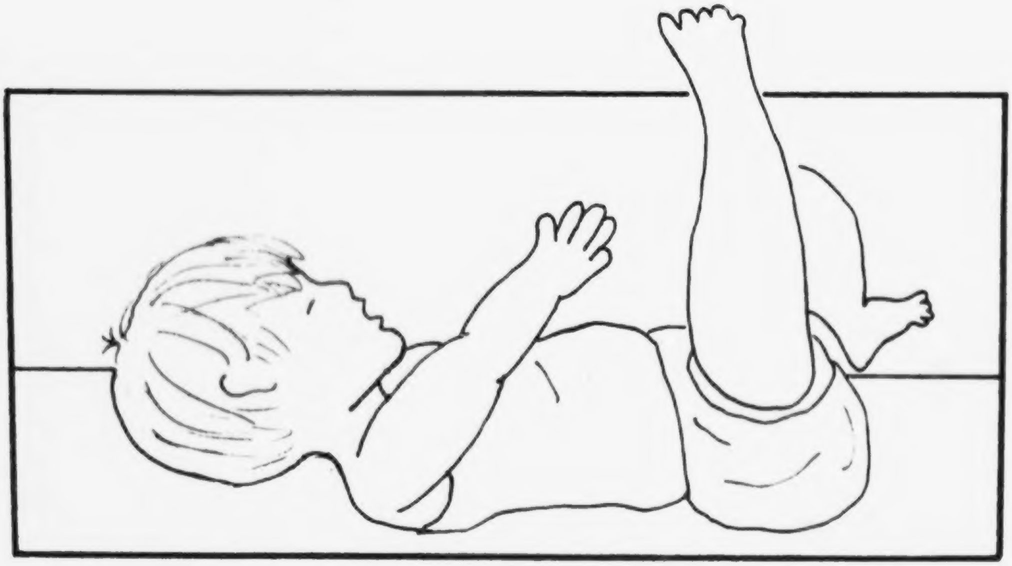
1. In a group of children, some of the older ones may take turns "teaching the baby to talk." They may have more success with faces, and then you can teach them how to teach sounds.

## Activity 2: Feet to mouth

| | |
|---|---|
| **Area:** | Movement (Motor) |
| **Pre-requisites:** | The child should be able to grab objects with her hands and move them to her mouth, and to comfortably bend at the waist. |
| **Purpose:** | To strengthen her stomach muscles, to teach her she has feet, and to stretch her back and leg muscles. |
| **Materials:** | None -- sometimes it is fun to do this in front of a mirror. |

**Procedures:**

1. When the child is lying on her back, bring your face close to hers and get her attention by talking to her. Say her name and "..., where are your feet?" Put your hand under her bottom and lift gently, bringing her hips and legs up, and her feet close to her head. Say, "Get your feet!", and help her to reach and grasp her feet. If she tries to pull her feet to her mouth, help her, but don't push too hard. If she fusses, just let her touch her feet and play with them. Talk to her about her feet, and praise her for being so clever. Let her keep her legs up, or help her if she cannot. Lower and raise her legs several times, letting her do some of the work.



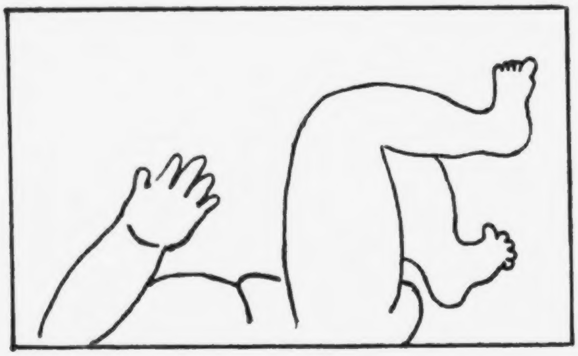
2. Do the same as in step #1, but don't raise her legs and feet all the way up -- stop about half way and wait to let her try to pull them the rest of the way up. If she does, say, "Good work! You pulled your legs up! There are your feet!" If she doesn't try to pull them up, or if she tries and fails, lift her legs the rest of the way. Let her grab her feet and help her take them to her mouth if she tries to do this. If not, push a little closer than last time, but don't force them. Stop if she begins to fuss. Keep doing this until she can pull her feet up from midway.

3. After saying, "Where are your feet?", put your hand under her bottom and gently raise her bottom and legs just a little. Wait to let her try to raise them the rest of the way. If she does it, praise her and help her grab her feet. If she doesn't try, or tries and fails, help her, and repeat this until she can lift her legs from close to the floor or bed. Help her grab her feet and take them to her mouth -- remember to be gentle.

4. In this activity you want her to be able to lift her legs and grab them to take them to her mouth whenever she wants to. Repeat the first three steps until you see her doing it by herself two or three times.

**Suggestions:**

1. In a group of children, older ones can do "exercises" -- bicycle pumping on their backs, etc., while you do this activity with the baby. Also, children four years old or above can help the child lift her legs, too, as long as you are there to remind them to be gentle.

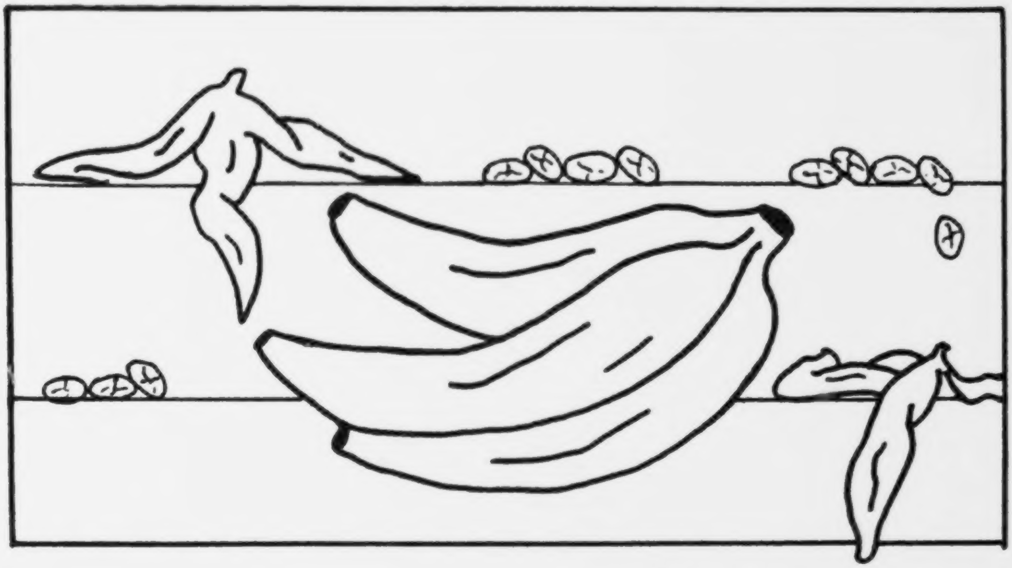


## Activity 3: Finger feeding

| | |
|---|---|
| **Area:** | Self-help -- eating |
| **Pre-requisites:** | The child should be able to pick up small objects with her fingers and be able to take things to her mouth. |
| **Purpose:** | To teach her that she can have some control over her eating -- and her life; to help her feel good about doing things for herself. |
| **Materials:** | A comfortable seat for the child with a tray or a waist-high table, bite-size pieces of soft food such as banana, cheese, bread etc. |

**Procedures:**

1. Place the child in the seat and say, "Time to eat!" (or whatever you say to call children to eat). Place one or two bite-size pieces of food on the tray in front of the child and call her attention to it by tapping on the tray or by saying "Look, banana!" Wait to let her reach for the food. If she does, help her take it to her mouth and praise her. If she doesn't reach for it, or if she reaches for it and misses, help her grab it and take it to her mouth. Say, "Mmm, good banana!" Say her name and "..., can eat all by herself."

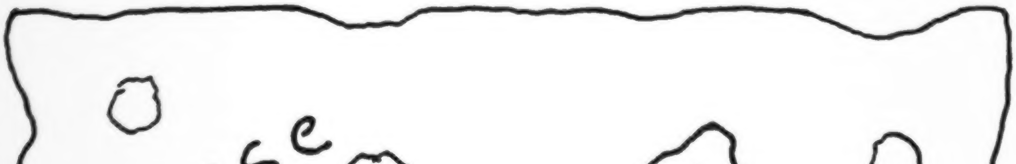


2. Place a few more pieces of food on the tray or table and let her try to pick them up. Help again, if she needs it. Remember to tell her what a good job she's doing. Give her a different kind of food, just keep them soft (cooked carrots, etc., if she has no teeth yet), or something harder like crackers if she has teeth.

If she doesn't want to take the food to her mouth, you could try putting her finger in pudding or peanut butter, or some other sticky, favorite food, and put her fingers in her mouth. When she gets the idea that she can put her fingers in the food and then in her mouth, try the finger foods again.

**Suggestions:**

This can be done with a child who does not yet hold up her head, as long as she is supported so that her head does not fall back and make her choke on the food. Of course, the best time to work on this is at meal and snack time, so that the child can learn by watching other children eat.

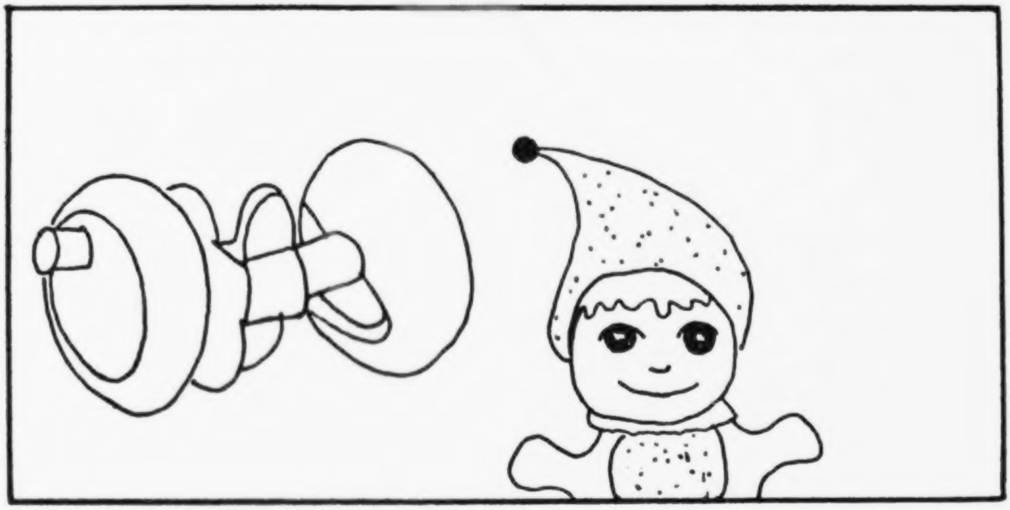


## Activity 4: Giving objects

| | |
|---|---|
| **Area:** | Language, movement of hands and fingers. (fine motor) |
| **Pre-requisites:** | The child should be able to pick up objects and let go of them easily. The child should be able to understand simple commands. |
| **Purpose:** | To teach her to respond when asked to do something and to help her learn to share and to trust people. |
| **Materials:** | Small toys or other objects the child likes to pick up and play with. |

**Procedures:**

1. When she is playing with a toy in her hand, hold out your hand to her and say her name and "..., give me the toy." She may offer you the toy and then take it back. This will be a game for her, and it is good if you play along. Let her put the toy in your hand, you close your fingers over it, and then open your hand and let it go when she starts to take it. Soon she may let go of the toy when it is in your hand. If she does, thank her and say, "You gave me the toy." Then give it back to her. If she does not let go of the toy, let the game go on for a while. Do not take the toy from her.



2. At some later time, offer her the toys she had during step 1. Say her name and "..., here is the toy." Let her take the toy, then say her name and "..., give me the toy." If she wants to play the game again, play with her and smile. Repeat the first part of step #1 several times until she gives you the toy. When she does, thank her, praise her, then give it back.

Try not to take the toy from her -- let her give it freely. If she gets hold of something that may harm her, you may have to take it away, but if she has learned that she can trust you not to take things from her, she may simply give you the dangerous object when you ask for it. Then you can give her something else to play with.

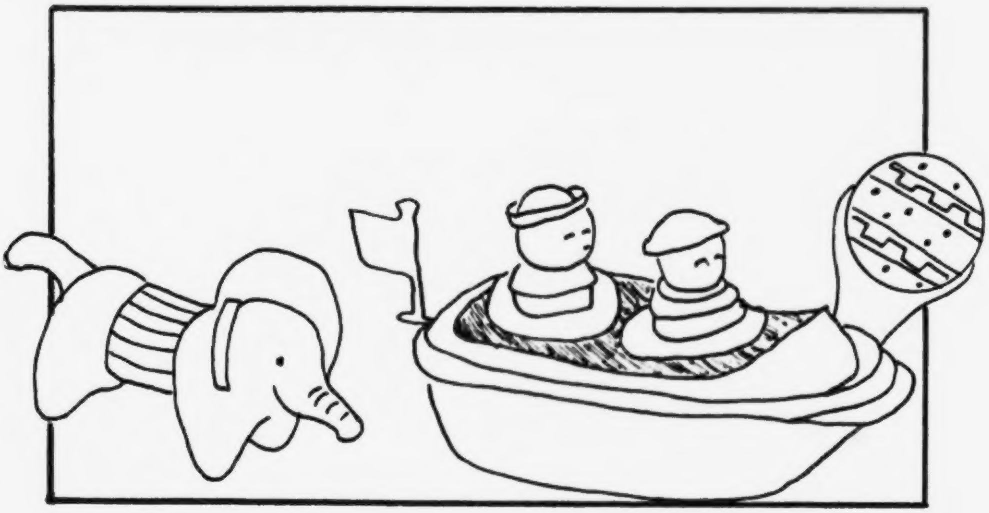
If she just won't give you the toy, try offering her something in exchange -- a favorite toy. You can make a game out of this, too, and eventually return to Step #1.

**Suggestions:**

A group of children can sit in a circle and pass objects from one to the other. You can help them learn names of new things and new textures as you do this. Or older children can do this activity with the young baby; all you have to do is show them how.

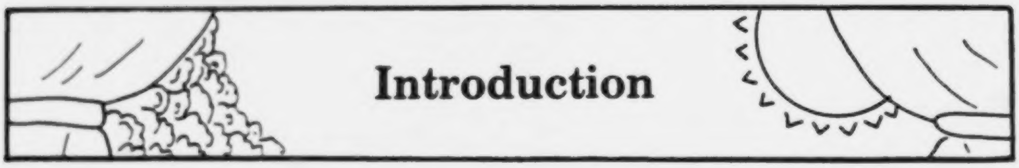
**Multicultural tip:**

If a child is from a particular culture, you can use toys from her environment. Remember that the child should be familiar and enjoy the toy. Ask the parent for her favorite toy.



# The How-to's of an Activity

# 3



# Introduction

Knowing how to present your activities is important. Are you prepared for the activity? Do you encourage the child during the activity? If the answer is "yes," then you are more apt to accomplish what you set out to do. If your answer is "no," then this may detract from your success.

In this chapter, Denise shares her tips on preparing for and presenting activities. Her positive experiences with Raul can be used as proof to her success.

**In reading this chapter see if you can answer the following questions:**

- How should a provider prepare for an activity?
- How should an activity be presented?
- What does positive reinforcement mean and what are ways of giving it?
- Why should activities be short and simple?

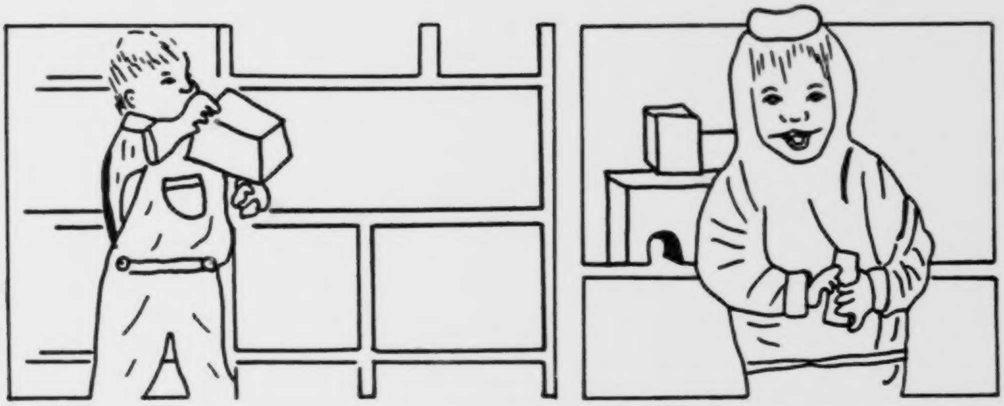
# Denise and Raul

Through my years as a Family Day Care Home provider, I have learned some helpful tools of the trade. Planning a lot of activities for children has taught me the importance of keeping activities short and simple, and that rewarding the child with praise will motivate him/her to go forward. These points helped me with Raul, who was a child with special needs, as well as all the other children that have passed through my Family Day Care Home.

Raul was a twin. His birth weight was low in comparison to his brother. In his early months he was an irritable baby who ate small amounts frequently and slept for short periods of time. Both brothers came to my Family Day Care Home when they were two months old. When he and his brother were seven months old, the physician expressed some concern about Raul's motor development, which seemed below average in relationship to other children his age.

The physician recommended an occupational therapist and soon the therapist was visiting Raul in my home twice a week. She would perform certain exercises and games in order to stimulate his motor development. She shared some of these activities with me so that when I had time I could perform some of them with Raul.

Raul is now two years old and walks right alongside his brother. He has shown great improvement and I know that I had some impact on his success.



# Preparing for the activity

Whenever I get together with Raul and/or the other children in order to perform an activity, I try to be prepared. I make sure the environment is well suited for the activity. If I want to work with Raul I either plan an activity for the other children in another area of the room, or I plan it to include them directly in the activity. If I didn't consider what to do with the other children, I would surely not get the best attention from Raul. He would possibly lose out because the activity would be interrupted, more than likely.

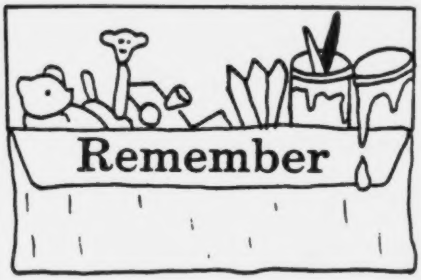
I ask myself, "Is the child, or are the children comfortable and ready for the activity?" For example, with Raul I make sure he is sitting comfortably and that he is in an attentive mood. I check to see if there are too many distractions at the time. I make sure there is little noise -- no TV and no radio to distract him.

Are the toys put away? Do I have the materials I need for the activity? Is there adequate lighting? These are all good questions to ask yourself before starting an activity.

I have my room arranged so that there is a space with few distractions. I use this space with one or several children in order to perform activities that require more of their attention. This uncluttered space helps them focus on me.

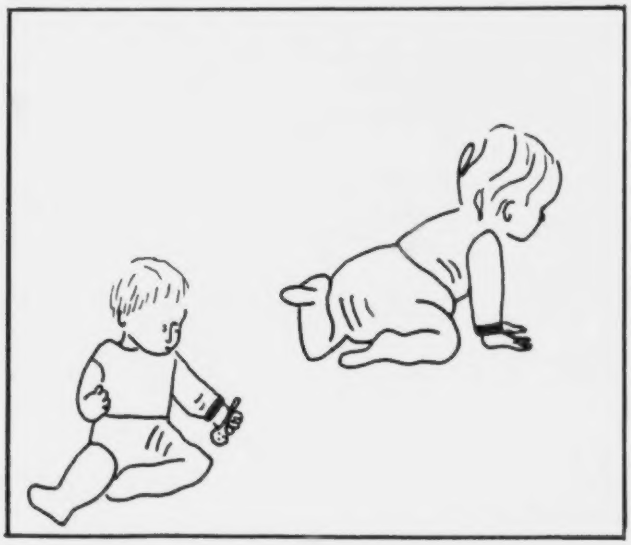
There are days, of course, where no amount of planning helps. We all know those days (where the weather doesn't permit us to go outside, days where the energy level is too high, or several of us are miserable with colds). However, planning and ensuring an optimum environment lays the groundwork for a more positive outcome from the activities.

- Plan your activities.
- Have your materials ready.
- Make sure the room is well lit.
- Make sure there are no distractions.
- Make sure the children are comfortable and ready for the activity.

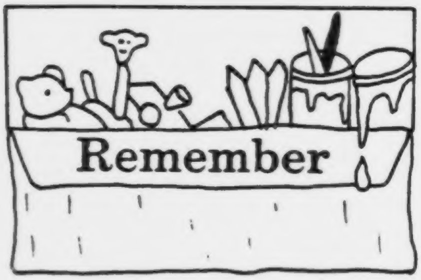


# The activity should be short and simple

Planning activities for Raul taught me more than ever that they should be short and simple. One day Raul and I were playing a game and having a lot of fun. As time went by, I wanted to take advantage of his good humor. After about five or six minutes he began to lose interest. I kept on prodding him and soon he just stopped trying. He squirmed and started looking in other directions. I realized that he was tired of the activity and I should not spend more than five minutes with him in an activity. I also found that it was best to have several short activities during the day. As time went on, and with more practice, I was able to make the activities last a bit longer.



These activities needed to be simple. I should not try to introduce too many things at one time. This was true for all the children. When I tried too many things at one time, the children would lose interest. Children enjoy repeating familiar activities that they do well. And one of my goals for all the children, including Raul, is that they leave the activity feeling accomplishment and satisfaction.



- Observe how long a child will attend to an activity.
- Make the activity simple.

## Guiding the child with special needs through the activity

I have found that by helping a child through an activity he may feel more confident in trying it. This has helped me with Raul and other children. For example, when Raul needs a little help, I usually first demonstrate what I want him to do. I then physically lead him through the activity and at the same time give directions such as, "Sit in your chair like this, Raul." I repeat it several times. In the next step I give less physical help and accompany it with explanations and directions, "Sit in your chair, Raul, with your legs in front of you." I might touch his legs gently. I do this repeatedly until he is ready for the next step. In the following step I only use gestures and words with no physical help. On the fifth step I only use my words and give a verbal explanation such as, "Raul, sit in your chair." I give him verbal help until he can do it alone.

These steps can be used with a child that has a difficult time understanding verbal explanations or directions. It supports the child as he/she learns the task.

### Helping a child through an activity

**First:** Demonstrate/model the activity

**Second:** Help the child physically through the activity, accompanied with a verbal explanation.

**Third:** Decrease the physical help accompanied with the verbal explanation.

**Fourth:** Use gestures and words only.

**Fifth:** Use verbal explanations only.

Repeat each step until the child is ready to proceed.

# Positive reinforcement

We all know how nice it feels to receive a positive comment about our work from parents and friends. We feel good about ourselves and it serves to motivate us to try even harder. Children also need to receive the rewards of approval.

In getting to know children, I try to find out what they like as positive reinforcement; a smile, a hug, clapping hands, verbal praise, etc. To them, receiving praise helps them feel successful in what they are doing and helps them look forward to trying new and challenging tasks.

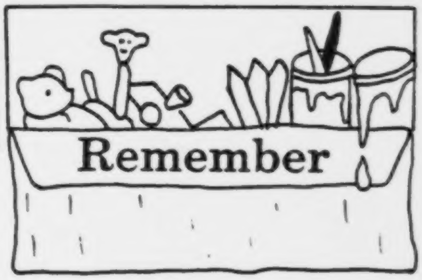
The following are some points to keep in mind when praising a child.

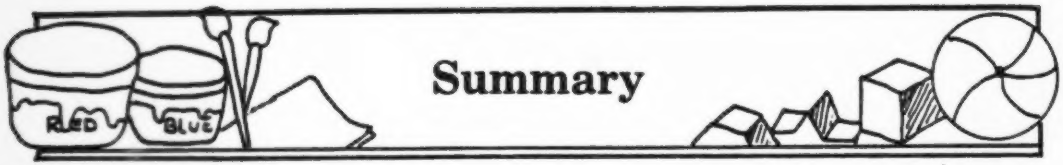
- Praise should be meaningful. If a child fails a task, don't just say, "That's great." Praise him appropriately by saying, "That was a good try. Let's try it again."
- Mean it when you say it. Show enthusiasm and approval in your voice and with your facial expressions.
- Remember to find out what a child likes as reinforcement. Does he like claps or does he prefer a hug.
- Always reinforce with praise at the moment the child performs what he/she has been asked to do.
- Remember to be consistent in your positive reinforcement.

You are very important in any child's world. Your negative messages can affect a child's confidence. Our job is to build healthy self-concepts in children.

Raul may have had some motor delays, but it did not stop him from trying and learning. Why? Because Raul felt confidence. No matter how small the task, he was praised for trying. His feelings of success were strengthened with praise. With success comes the feeling of satisfaction and a feeling of self-worth. Raul grew and took on new challenges because of consistent positive reinforcement.

Positive reinforcement nurtures successful learning.





# Summary

This chapter has discussed important aspects of presenting activities. It has explained that one should make sure the environment is right, that the activity should be short and simple, that children should be prepared, and that positive reinforcement is an important ingredient. Children learn to enjoy trying new challenges when they experience success. For this reason, activities should be well thought out to ensure success.

# Activities

Denise had some positive experiences with Raul. Here are a few activities that she used with him in order to help him develop his motor skills. These activities alone would not have been effective if Denise hadn't worked closely with the therapist and the parents and hadn't considered the child's needs, his readiness and his environment. Positive reinforcement was a key factor in his success.

**NOTES:** ______________________________________________

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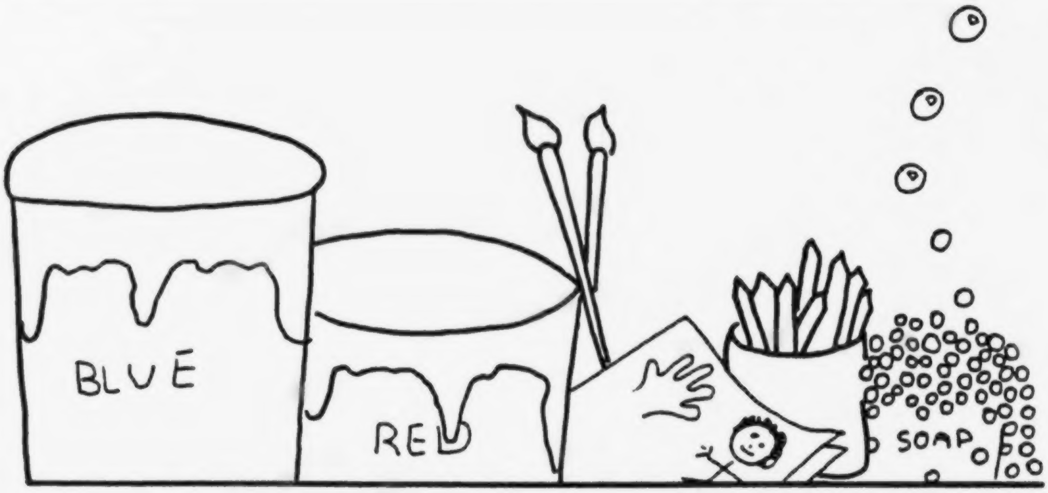


## Activity 1: Sitting

**Area:** Motor

**Pre-requisites:** The child, while on his stomach, should be able to raise his head, prop himself on his forearms and be able to roll over. He should also be able to follow moving objects with his eyes and reach for and grasp objects placed near him.

**Purpose:** Develop motor skills for the transition from lying to sitting.

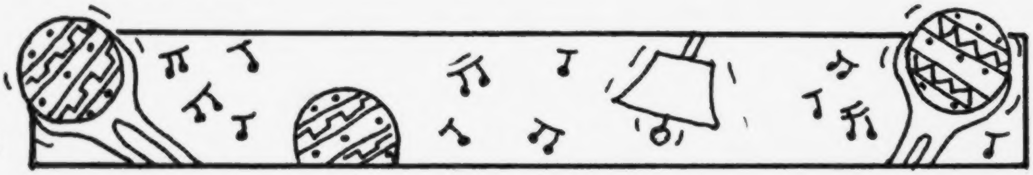
**Materials:** Rattle or sound toy small enough for the child to grasp.

**Procedures:**

1. Use a corner or create a corner and place pillows in the corner.
2. Place the child against the pillows and place your hands on his hips. Have him lean forward on his arms and let him push into sitting.
3. Then place the child on his side. Make sure the arm and leg he is lying on are straight. Take the upper leg and cross it over the lower one so it is in front. Use your arm to keep the child on his side and the head forward.
4. Place a toy in front of the child and have him hit or move it.

**Suggestions:**

1. You may also have a toy in front of the child so that he will have to reach a little and begin to use the lower arm to push up a little.
2. You can also sit the child on your knee (one knee), hold his hands in yours to get balance, then give him a toy in both his hands. Then place your hands on his hips and give him support there. Don't let the child lean on you. His back should be away from you.



## Activity 2: Rolling

**Area:** Motor

**Pre-requisites:** The child, while on his stomach, should be able to raise his head and prop himself on his forearms. He should have begun to roll over as well.

**Purpose:** Develop rolling (without the back arching and the head leaning backwards).

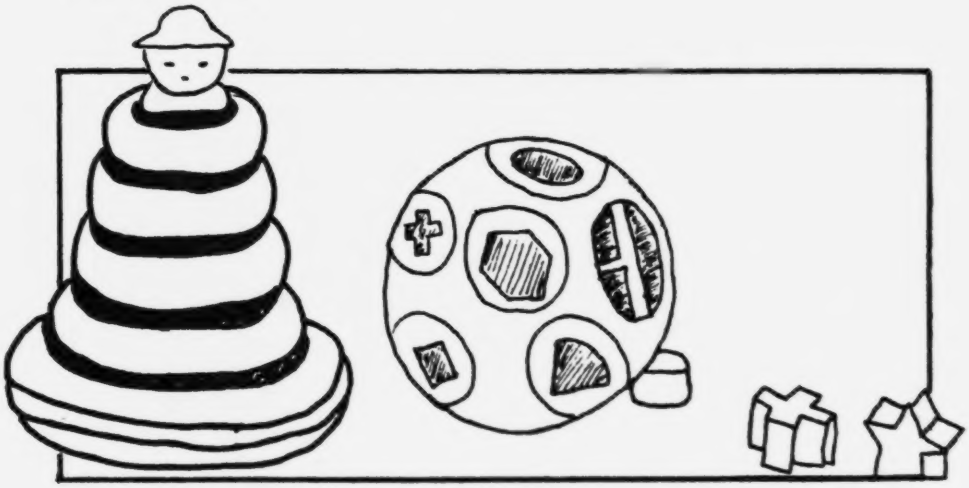
**Materials:** A child's favorite toy.

**Procedures:**

1. Have the corner ready with pillows.
2. Place the child on his side. Use your hands on his hips to turn them and get the rolling started from there.
3. Use one hand to gently keep the head forward and place a favorite toy in front of him, thus tempting the child to move.
4. Remember to praise him for his efforts.

**Suggestions:**

1. Have the child on his stomach and get him to prop up on his arms, then place your hands under his stomach and support his belly so it is up and then push back. This will incorporate the roll and move him into a sitting position, which is the normal transition.



## Activity 3: Crawling

**Area:** Motor

**Pre-requisites:** The child should be able to prop himself on his forearms, hold his head, and be able to reach for objects as well as roll over.

**Materials:** The child's favorite toy (i.e., a colorful rattle).

**Purpose:** To help the child develop crawling.

**Procedure:**

1. Have a corner with pillows ready.
2. Choose the child's favorite toy to motivate him.
3. Place the child on his stomach.
4. Have him prop himself on his forearms.
5. Place your hands at each hip and bend his hips and knees.
6. Help him keep this position by supporting him at his hips.
7. Have the toy in front of him to catch and hold his attention.
8. Remember to praise him with a soothing voice, "Good boy."

**Suggestions:**

1. Sit with your leg stretched out, have the child "crawl" over you leg, helping him by letting him hold onto your shirt, arm, etc. While you hold one leg in standing and help him bend at the hip and move the other leg over.
2. You can vary the height by placing a pillow under your knee or lifting up your leg.
3. Remember to use a favorite toy to tempt the child.

# A Child's Work is Play

# 4

# Introduction

Let's face it. Children are the experts on play. When we say the words, "Children, let's play house, let's play with the blocks or let's go and play outside," their faces light up. Children are not only experts on play but they learn a great deal about themselves, others and the world around them, through play. For this reason, this chapter is dedicated to "play." Nhu-Anh shares with us her experiences of how Tom, a child with special needs, improved and gained confidence through play.

When reading this chapter, see if you can find the answers to these questions.

- What is "play" to children?
- How do children learn through play?
- How can you participate in a child's play?

# Nhu-Anh and Tom

I'm a child at heart, I guess. The best part of the day for me is when I get down on my hands and knees and play with the children in my Family Day Care Home. How time flies during these spontaneous moments of the day! When it's over, we all leave content. These are the moments where I truly feel like one of the children.

I can't stress enough how important play has been in the positive growth of children. This positive aspect of my work as a Family Day Care Home Provider brings to mind a child that was one of my favorite playmates - Tom, alias Super Tom.

When Tom was 2-1/2 years old, he was diagnosed as having some mild motor problems. He had a slight weakness in his right hand and preferred using his left hand. He also had difficulties shifting his weight from one side to the other. I also observed that during free play he would verbally direct the play of the other children rather than involve himself physically in the play. This happened especially when they played on climbing equipment. His balance was slightly unsure, therefore he was afraid of climbing play equipment.

At first Tom was a challenge to me. How could I get him to use his right hand more often? How could I help him develop the skills and confidence to improve his balance?

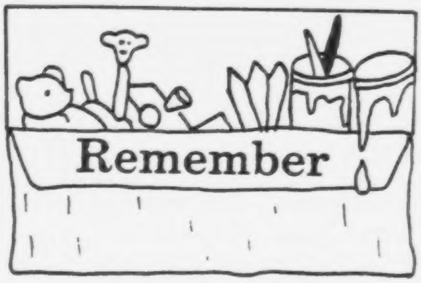
Luckily, Tom's parents began sending him to an occupational therapist. She shared with me certain exercises that would help Tom improve his motor development. I was asked to carry on these exercises and suggestions in my home. Where could I start and how was I going to do it? I soon found the way to get him going. We became playmates.

# The meaning of play to children

Children are stars when it comes to playing. Their imagination carries them to the ends of the earth. They can play almost anywhere or with any object. Blocks can be bridges, airplanes, space ships or castles. Sand in a plastic plate can be soup or the most delicious pudding. Pebbles dropping into a tin cup can be music to a child's ears. Water from a hose can be as entertaining as going to the pool. It doesn't take much for a child to find something to do or to find the energy to do it. Play comes naturally to a child. It is part of every child's world and is the most pleasurable ingredient in childhood. Therefore, there is no better tool to use than play to help children learn. We, as experts in understanding children, should take advantage of a child's play by immersing ourselves in that child's world of play.

I returned to my childhood through Tom. He loved animals. He could name elephants, horses, giraffes and many more. We pretended we were these animals. We would get on our hands and knees mimicking elephants and horses. This was a good exercise for him to develop the ability to shift his weight from side to side. He would get on my back and pretend to ride a camel or bronco. This exercise was good for developing his balance and helping him learn how to stop himself from falling (protective reflexes). These activities were created from his interest in animals. We added a dash of imagination to the therapist's suggestions and created a playful way of doing an exercise that would help him improve his motor skills. It was simple and fun. Activities for children with special needs don't have to be tedious or highly complicated for them to work. Activities can be fun. Taking time out from being an "adult" and being willing to get down to the level of children will make your day to day interactions so much more fruitful. A dash of creativity goes a long way.

- Children are experts at play.
- Play is an important part of their world.
- Playing with children can be fun if one is willing to be part of their world.



# Children learn through play

Not only is play enjoyable but it also enhances learning.

An infant learns by exploring his environment. He learns by touching, tasting and smelling all that is around him. As he gets older, he sees that he can make things happen. A child drops a toy. It makes a sound. The child picks it up and watches it fall again. The child is learning about the cause and effect of his/her movements. A child may pour sand out of a cup onto the floor. "See what I did!" They learn by trial and error, by experimenting. That is why play is so valuable to the development of a child.

All areas of a child's development are stimulated through play.

# Play ..................................

- **Play helps children develop their motor skills**

While playing with manipulative toys, children develop their fine motor skills. They learn through dropping, pushing, pulling, poking and pinching all that is within hands' reach. Their little fingers become more precise as they practice and experiment. Their gross motor skills improve as they practice sitting, crawling and standing. They fall, get right back up and try again. They explore all spaces and learn to move their bodies under chairs, crawl over and under objects and climb all that's available. As they continuously move around, they are learning about what their bodies can and cannot do in relation to their environment.

- **Play helps children develop their language skills**

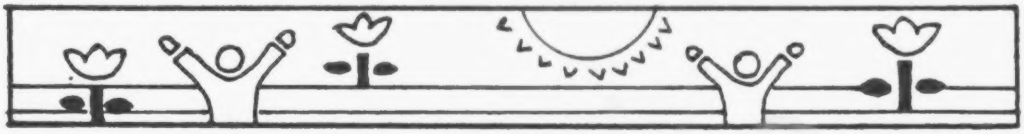
Children stimulate their language skills by imitating sounds and making up new sounds as time goes by. They go to the zoo and hear the sounds monkeys make and try to imitate them. They hear you speak and imitate long sentences by putting sounds together. They develop language skills through imitation and play.

- **Play helps children interact with each other**

Children develop their social skills through play. They learn to share and interact with others. Play enhances their ability to relate to people. They are role models for each other and learn from each other. Play provides a natural and positive opportunity to stimulate those important social skills.

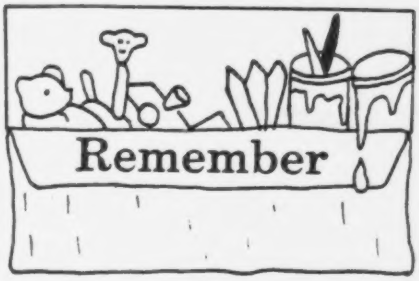
- **Play helps children learn to think**

Through play, children stimulate their cognitive (thinking) skills. They learn to make decisions, solve problems and learn to be independent. Independence gives them a feeling of self-worth. "Look what I did!" the child says with pride.



Tom learned through play. He learned to gain confidence in climbing the outdoor play equipment. He learned through practice and through play. We played with maracas and bells in both hands and did other playful activities and soon he began using his right hand more often. Tom improved his balance through playing riding games on my back and other playful exercises. Soon he didn't need me to imitate the walk of an elephant or horse. He would play these games with his friends. Play was an integral part of Tom's positive development while in my Family Day Care Home.

- Through play, children explore their environments
- Children learn through play
- Social/emotional, cognitive, self-help and motor skills are all stimulated through play.



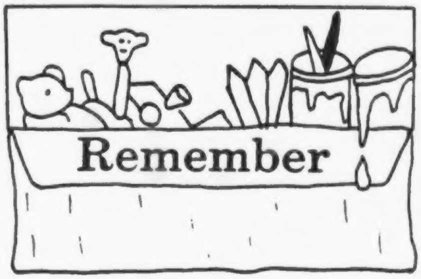
# Helping children learn through play

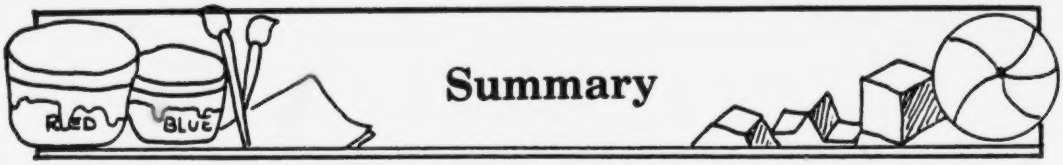
"Creative" ways of leading children into learning is one of the challenges of a provider. One should be able to: get on one's hands and knees and walk like a camel, use one's voice to make "fun" sounds or use facial expressions to express joy and other emotions. The way you use your body in exaggerated ways gets a child's attention. While reading a story you can use your voice, face and body to make the story so much more fun for children. They will focus more on what you say. It is all part of thinking like a child and being willing to play along with children.

Tom, initially, was a bit hesitant when moving his body to climb and in other physical activities. The therapist suggested certain activities that would give him more confidence in his movements. She suggested that we use a lot of imaginary play to get him involved and moving. We made a cape from a bag so he could become Super Tom. He performed many heroic feats leaping and climbing around the room. As he became more active, we built obstacle courses, using a table and chairs. All the children could participate in this activity. Tom, consequently, became more comfortable with his movements and he was persuaded to try things he would not have tried earlier. Through practice, his confidence grew and his motor skills improved. For him, these were not exercises to fear. They were, instead, fun and enjoyable aspects of play.

As we can see, "play" can influence a child's openness to learn new challenges. Activities can also be introduced to children in tempting and playful ways in order to get positive responses from them. If they think it will be fun, they are much more apt to be motivated to try.

- Activities are fun if introduced in enticing and creative ways.
- Use your body, voice and facial expressions in playful ways when working with children.
- "Play" as an instrument of learning brings many rewards for both provider and child.





# Summary

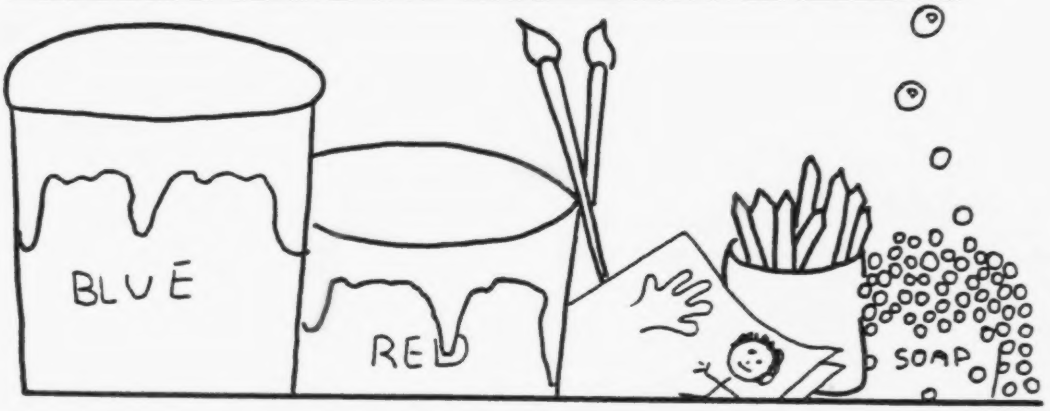
Play encourages growth in children. Through play we've found that children come to know the world around them. By acting on their environment through play, the children learn about themselves and those around them. Your interaction with them can help enhance their experiences. Their successful experiences in playing will help them gain confidence in themselves and their capabilities.

# Activities

The following are simple activities Nhu-Anh used with Tom. These are fun and playful and encourage motor development. They are enticing because they come from child's play. So remember when introducing these activities as well as others that the best way to tempt children is by presenting them an activity as play or a game.

Through these activities, the children will improve their balance and weight shift (ability to move from one side to the other) and will increase their ability to plan and coordinate their movement.

**NOTE:** ______________________________



## Activity 1: Wheelbarrow walk

**Area:** Motor

**Pre-requisites:** The child should be able to walk, climb, grasp and release objects. He should also be able to use his hands together (i.e.: throw a ball).

**Purpose:** Improve balance with better weight shift (ability to move one's body from one side to another) and to improve muscle tone in the shoulder and arm area.

**Materials:** Peg board

**Procedures:**

1. Place the peg board on the floor a couple of feet from you and the child.
2. Tell the child you are going to play a game and that it is called the "wheelbarrow game."
3. Explain to him that he will be walking on his hands with your help and that both of you will go towards the peg board. Tell him not to let his arms fall to the ground.
4. Tell him to get on his hands and knees and you will pick up his legs. Have him walk towards the peg board on his hands while you hold his legs.
5. Encourage him along the way. Tell him things like "You're doing it," "You are trying, good job."
6. Encourage him until you reach the peg board. Praise him for his efforts at reaching the goal.
7. When the two of you have reached the peg board, tell him to remove one of the pegs with one hand.
8. Have him remove another peg with another hand.
9. Remember to praise him after each try: "Good try," "Good job."

**Suggestions:**

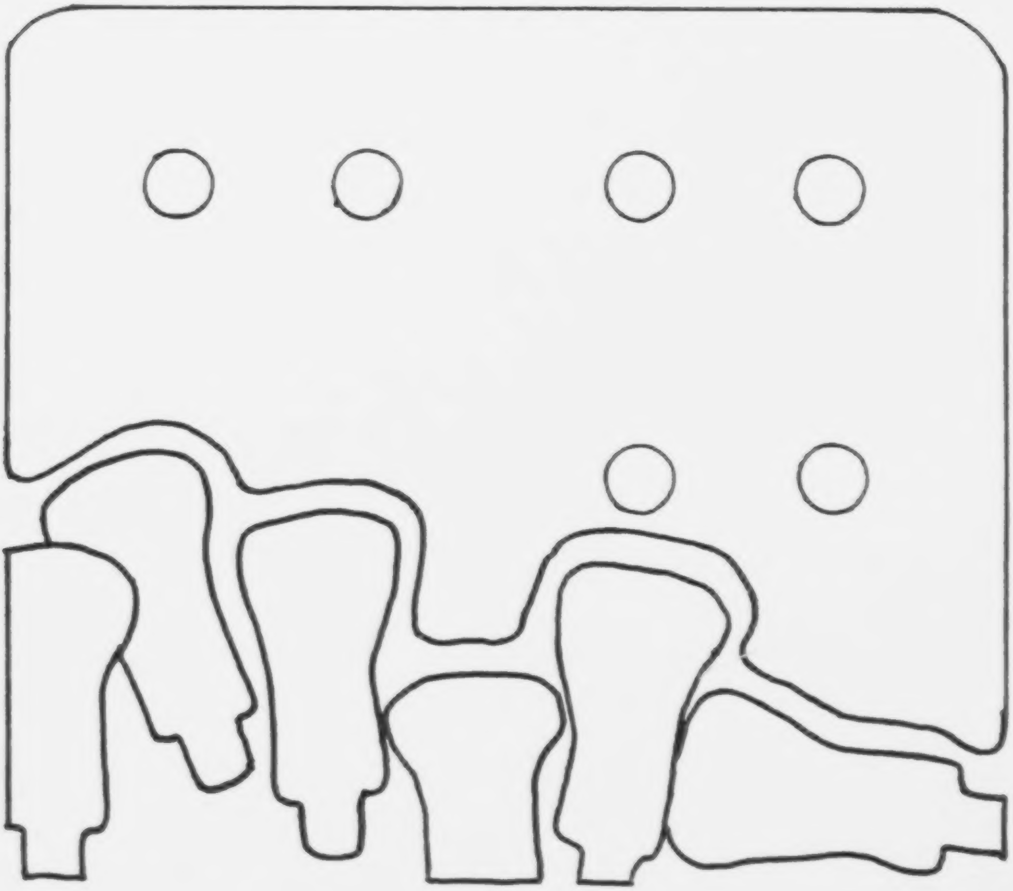
1. You can also use another child to demonstrate the activity.

2. You can vary the toys, using other motivating toys. Think of toys which motivate the child and which can be used by both hands to manipulate (i.e.: blocks, telephone, toy truck with objects to remove or place).

3. This activity can also be done with a group of children. The children can take turns and applaud each other.

**Multicultural tips:**

Instead of using the above mentioned toys, you can use a toy particular to the child's environment. Remember the child should be familiar with and enjoy the toy.



## Activity 2: Obstacle course

**Area:** Motor

**Pre-requisite:** The child should be able to walk, climb, crawl.

**Purpose:** To improve planning of movement, balance and weight shift as well as improve confidence in general body movement.

**Materials:** Household furniture (i.e.: chairs, tables) Cardboard box one can crawl through. Odds and ends child can jump over.

**Procedures:**

1. Find an area in your home large enough for arranging furniture.

2. Place chairs and tables, box and other objects to form an obstacle course.

3. Tell the child that you will be playing a game. Explain exactly what you want him to do (i.e.: crawl through the box, jump over the block, slide under the table). Depending upon the child's skill level, you may have to demonstrate.

4. While the child performs the activity, praise his movements (i.e.: "good crawling," "good jumping").

5. Repeat game and remember to praise the child.

**Suggestions:**

1. As child gains confidence, increase the amount of difficulty by adding new objects and increasing what is required for him to do.

2. To motivate the child, ask him to set up or help you set up the obstacle course.

3. This activity can also be used for a group of children. It is important that they understand that they must take turns and that one child at a time be following the obstacle course.

## Activity 3: Simon Says

**Area:** Motor

**Pre-requisites:** The child must know his body parts, be able to follow directions, walk, crawl, and kneel.

**Purpose:** Improve balance with better weight shift and confidence in movement.

**Materials:** None

**Procedures:**

1. Tell the child you will play Simon Says. When Simon says do something, the child is to do what he is told. If the directions are not said by Simon, then the child is to stand still.

2. Demonstrate to the child what you just explained.

3. After demonstrating, have a practice run with the child to make sure he understands.

4. Play the game. Ask him to perform the following movements: "Simon Says":
   -Stand on one foot
   -Stand on the other foot
   -Jump up and down
   -Kneel
   -Crawl
   -Raise one arm
   -Raise the other arm
   -Bend over and touch toes

5. Each time the child does what Simon says, praise his accomplishment with "Good job." If the child tries but does not succeed, praise the child for his efforts, "Good try, let's try again."

**Suggestions:**

1. You can have the child be the teacher and have you follow his directions.

2. This is a good group game where each child can take turns directing the group.

3. Add more difficult movements to the game when the child has succeeded in several of the movements.

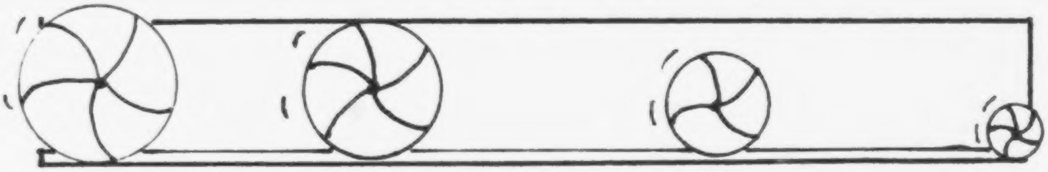
## Activity 4: Ball rolling

**Area:** Motor

**Pre-requisites:** The child must be able to kick and roll a ball.

**Purpose:** To improve weight shift, improve motor coordination.

**Materials:** Large ball (beach ball or sponge ball, preferably)



**Procedures:**

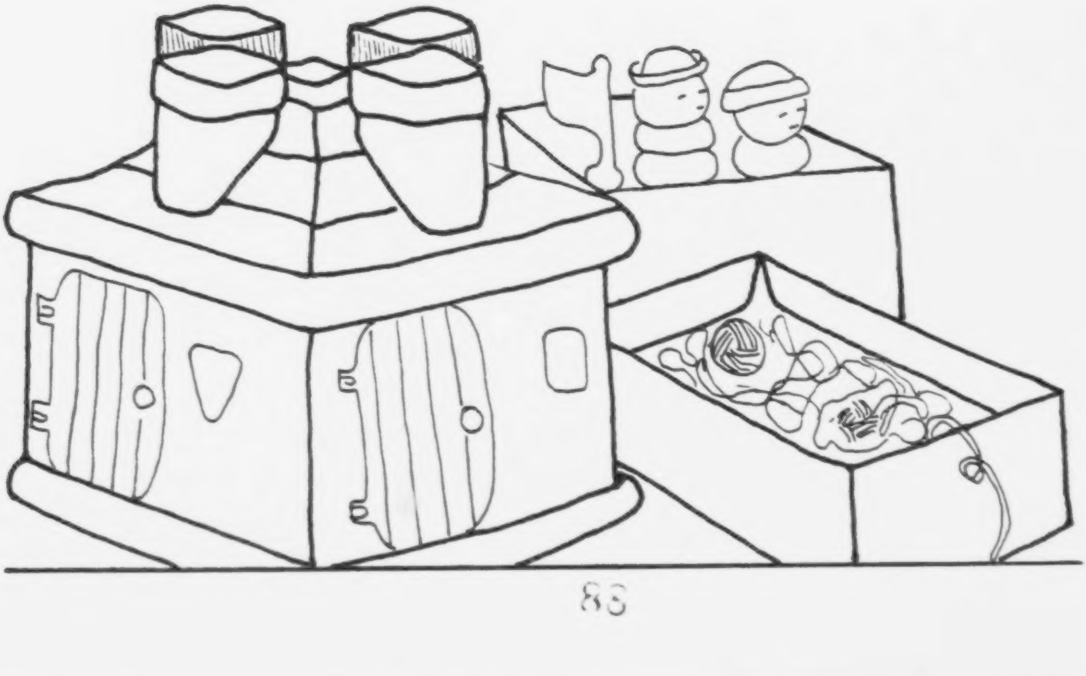
1. Tell the child you are going to play a new game with a ball.
2. Have him lay on his back and tell him to pick up the ball with his feet.
3. Reinforce with claps or words of praise.
4. Have him move the ball from side to side once he can hold the ball with his feet.
5. Once he has tried several times to hold the ball with his feet, ask him to get on his side while lying down and roll the ball to his feet. Tell him to kick the ball.
6. Repeat these and remember to praise his efforts.

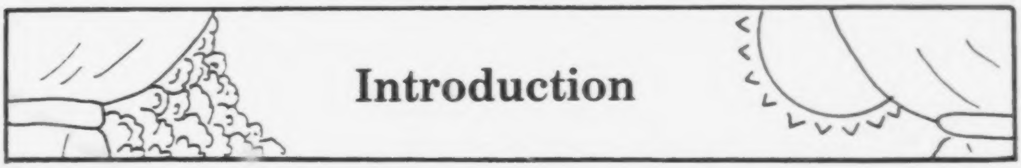
**Suggestions:**

1. While the child is lying down, roll the ball to his upper body and have him roll it back to you with his hands.
2. You can try different exercises with the ball. (i.e.: running and kicking, holding the ball with both hands and raising the ball over his head and from side to side, etc.)
3. Children as a group can also play this game. Remember to have them take turns and to praise their efforts.

# The Enjoyment of Creating Toys and Fun Places for Children

# 5





# Introduction

Toys don't have to be expensive or factory made for children to enjoy them. There are many household items that can be just as enticing. Even the arrangement of the Family Day Care Home can also be done in a variety of creative ways. Joy, a Family Day Care Home Provider, shares her ideas with us. She relates her story of Terry, a child with special needs who taught her the meaning of toys and space. When reading this chapter, see if you can find the answers to the following questions.

- What are some materials around the house that can be turned into toys for children?
- Can one toy be used to teach more than one skill?
- What are some ways of arranging one's home in order to make it a more fun and learning environment?
- How can a provider arrange a space for infants?

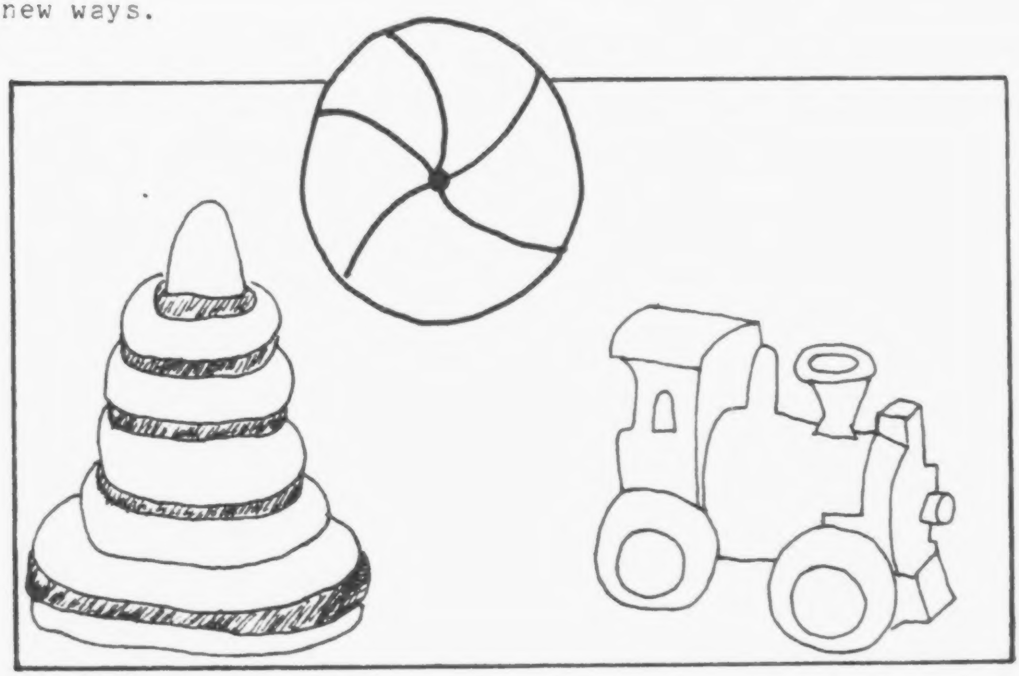
# Terry and Joy

Terry was thirteen months old when he came to my Family Day Care Home. He was born with medical problems and had to stay in the hospital for the first 3-1/2 months of his life. Spending all that time in a hospital kept him from having the learning experiences that most children have at that age. Often, when children have serious medical problems in early life, their development may be affected. Terry was 3 to 5 months behind in some areas of his development.

Terry lived with his parents and older brothers and sisters, who were at least ten years older than he. So he spent a lot of time at home with adults. He did not have the opportunity of being exposed to other children his own age.

Terry's parents were fortunate to find a program with a special educator who would visit Terry in his home twice a week. After a couple of months she and the parents decided that Terry would benefit from playing with other young children. She recommended that he spend time in a Family Day Care Home. It was thought that if he had experiences with other young children he would learn many things he had missed. So Terry was referred to me.

I had not had a lot of experience with children with special needs. At first I was a bit hesitant. Was my home equipped to accommodate a child with difficulties? Did I need to have special toys or equipment for Terry? I soon found out that most everything I needed I already had. The special educator visited my home twice a week and gave me great ideas for toys that I not only could use with Terry, but with most of the other children. She also gave me ideas in arranging my home in fun and new ways.



# Toys made from materials around the house

One day, while playing with the children, I put down a wooden spoon at my side. Suddenly I heard a bang and saw Terry banging the spoon on a surface. His eyes gleamed at each tap he made. I said to myself, "look at how a child can find pleasure from such a simple game." That night I started looking through my house to see if I could find materials that the children would enjoy. By the time I had finished, I had filled several large boxes of playful goodies.

I had accumulated boxes, containers, scraps of material and lots of odds and ends. They could be used in so many creative ways. The following is a list of materials you too can find around your house.

| **Materials** | **Some Uses** |
|---|---|
| • large cardboard boxes | • children can get in and out of them, play train<br>• good for developing gross motor skills |
| • cereal cartons, margarine boxes, milk cartons, egg cartons, kitchen towel or toilet paper tubes | • use the boxes as containers or building blocks, the tubes for making necklaces or telescopes<br>• good for developing fine motor skills |
| • scraps of materials, string, yarn, paper, cardboard, ribbon | • use to make feely boards or to do art activities<br>• The feely board is good for developing a young child's sense of touch.<br>• As art activities, good for developing creativity and fine motor skills |

| | |
|---|---|
| • newspapers, paper bags, magazines | • newspapers and paper bags can be used for art activities and to make puppets<br>• cut out pictures from magazines for language activities or art activities<br>• These activities are good for developing fine motor skills and language skills |
| • old clothes (shoes, hats, dresses, shirts, pants, purses) | • use in a house corner for dress up time<br>• good for developing self-help skills and promoting social interaction |
| • unbreakable dishes and kitchen utensils | • children can play house and pretend cooking<br>• good for social and cognitive skills |
| • pots and pans | • children can tap them for musical activities or use them for the house corner |
| • large buttons and spools of thread | • children can string them, paint them<br>• good for developing fine motor skills |

These are just a few of the many materials you can find in your house. You would be surprised at what you can find and how the children will love to play with them.

**Multicultural materials**

You might have, at one time or another, children from different cultures, races and different environments. You can enhance your understanding and sensitivity of their needs by becoming familiar with their environment and acquiring materials that are part of that environment. Ask their parents if they can donate materials from their homes, such as: old clothes, material for covering toys, books and also ask for suggestions (i.e.: songs, dances, holiday ideas).

In addition, all children should be exposed to the wide variety of peoples in this world, including those from different cultures, races, backgrounds and abilities. Some suggested materials to promote this concept are:

- Posters from different countries to decorate your walls. You can get them at some travel agencies.
- You can buy or make dolls of different races, cultures, as well as dolls with different disabilities.
- Books and records about different cultures, races, types of families and about people with disabilities.

These additional materials will only serve to enrich your family day care home environment and nurture a positive awareness and respect in the children for the similarities and differences between peoples.

**A word on safety**

When presenting new toys to children, there are a few things you should keep in mind. I usually ask myself how these materials and toys should be used and for which age groups. I ask myself what are safe objects for each age group. To help you, I have included a list of questions to ask yourself when you make or buy a new toy. These questions should always be kept in mind before allowing a child to play with a toy.

- Is the toy safe?
- Is the material or paint nontoxic?
- Is the toy clean?
- Is the toy appropriate for a child of a particular age?

# A toy can be used to teach more than one skill

A string, a cardboard box, spools - children love these simple objects. I found out, with the help of the special educator, that any one of these simple materials could be used in a variety of ways.

Let's take, for example, a milk carton and spools of thread. How can these simple materials be used in different ways?

- Infants can learn to place in and remove the spools from the container. They are developing their fine motor skills in this activity.
- One can help a child learn his/her colors with a plain milk carton and the spools painted in different colors. For example, one can ask a child to find all the red spools in the carton. This can be a fun activity for a child learning the basic colors.
- The carton and spools can be used to teach the prepositions. A fun activity can be a game asking the child to "put the spool in the carton" and asking, "Where is the spool?" "The spool is in the carton."
- Counting can be reinforced with the simple carton and spools. "Put two spools in the carton." "Take two spools out of the carton."

These are just a few of the many ways this simple homemade toy can be used.

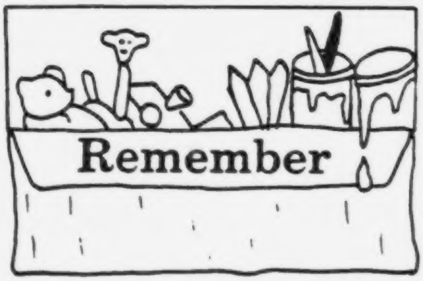
Here is a fun exercise for YOU TO TRY. Take an object and try to think of all the ways it can be used in order to teach a child different skills. Think of the object's color, size, shape, texture and use. Practicing this exercise will help you develop new ideas on how to use the materials you have in your house.

Let's look at an experience I had with Terry. One day he was exploring on the floor while I watched. I had a small oatmeal box on a low shelf, containing plastic animals. I saw Terry reach for the box. He tilted it over and the animals came tumbling down. Terry was amazed at what happened. I took the opportunity to interact with him. I placed the animals back in the box and Terry tried dumping it out again. He loved it. The animals were small enough for him to grasp and yet large enough to be safe. As days and weeks passed, he learned new skills. He was able to pick up the animals, and put them in the carton and dump them out again. He was not only learning the cause and effect of things but how he could control these occurrences. He was also developing his ability to make both his eyes and hands work together.

I realized that I could use this particular toy in a variety of ways. I had primarily been using the box of animals with older children. I had them name the different animals and practice the variety of animal sounds.

I began discovering how versatile were the materials I had. For example, I had made several bean bags of different colors and sizes. I soon found that they had many uses. The children could manipulate and throw them in order to find where they fell. We could play "a hide and find" game or "throw the bean bag into the box" game. With the older children, we could also play "What colors are the bean bags?", "How many bean bags do we have?", "What shape is the bean bag?", "Which bean bag is larger or smaller?" or "Which bean bag is lighter or heavier?" We could also place the bean bag on our heads for balance or play preposition games such as "place the bean bag on, under, inside, outside, etc." These simple bean bags could be used for many fun activities. So too, many of the toys and materials in my Family Day Care Home could be used for other activities that I had yet to imagine.

- Toys can be versatile
- Toys can be used for more than one activity
- A toy can be used to develop many skills

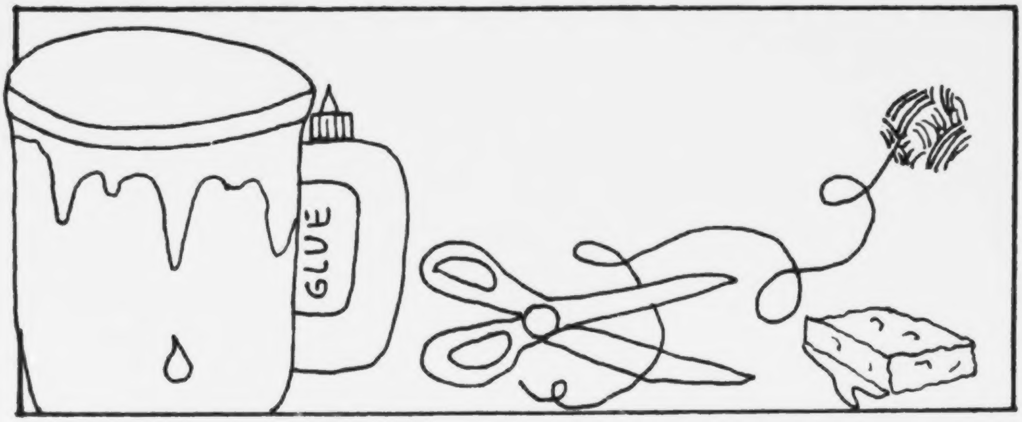


# Ideas for arranging your home

As we all know, one of the challenges to a provider is deciding on how best to use the space available. We have to be creative and flexible in our approach. We end up trying different ways until we feel our home is best arranged for the children and ourselves. On one hand we want the environment to be a learning environment where children can explore and play. On the other hand, we want the environment to be neat and safe. We also want to avoid having to say "Don't touch" or "Leave those materials alone." Being organized is the beginning of the solution. Creating storage areas can facilitate the job.

When preparing your home, you should keep in mind that it should encourage independence as well as encourage learning. If you have children of different ages, it is a true challenge. You want the spaces to be clean, safe, comfortable as well as stimulating.

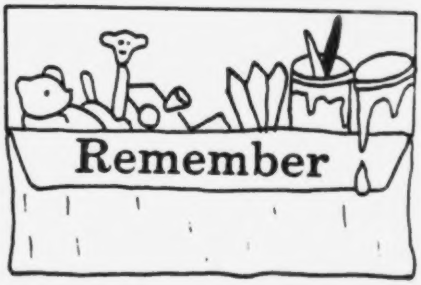
One way to make the environment more creative, efficient and safe is to divide the spaces into different areas for the different types of activities. The following are a number of suggested areas.



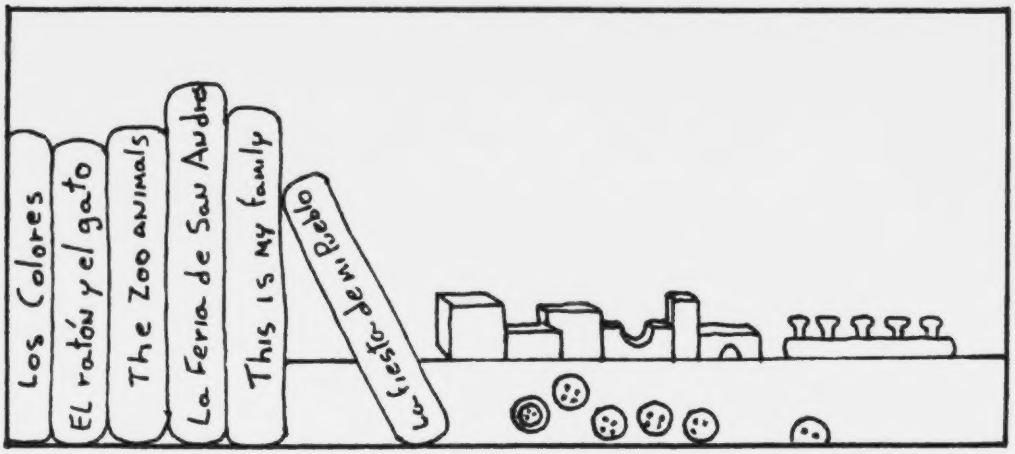
**Art and Cooking Area** - This area should be set up so that you and the children can enjoy being messy.

Suggested Materials and Equipment

- low tables and chairs if possible, or a coffee table, or kitchen table.
- scraps of paper, cloth, glue, play dough, paints, ribbon, yarn.
- small sponges, sponge hair rollers, scissors.



- Make sure there is a place where they can display the children's art work at eye level (wall or the back of a bookcase or door).
- Be sensitive to the child with a disability. Is there enough space for that wheel chair or adaptive chair or table?
- Don't be afraid to make a mess. It is a fun and learning experience for the children.
- The end product of the art activity does not have to be neat and perfect. What is important is that the child had fun doing the activity.

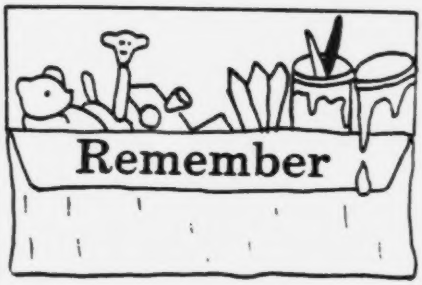

Los Colores
El ratón y el gato
The Zoo animals
La Feria de San Andr
This is my family
La fiesta de mi Pueblo

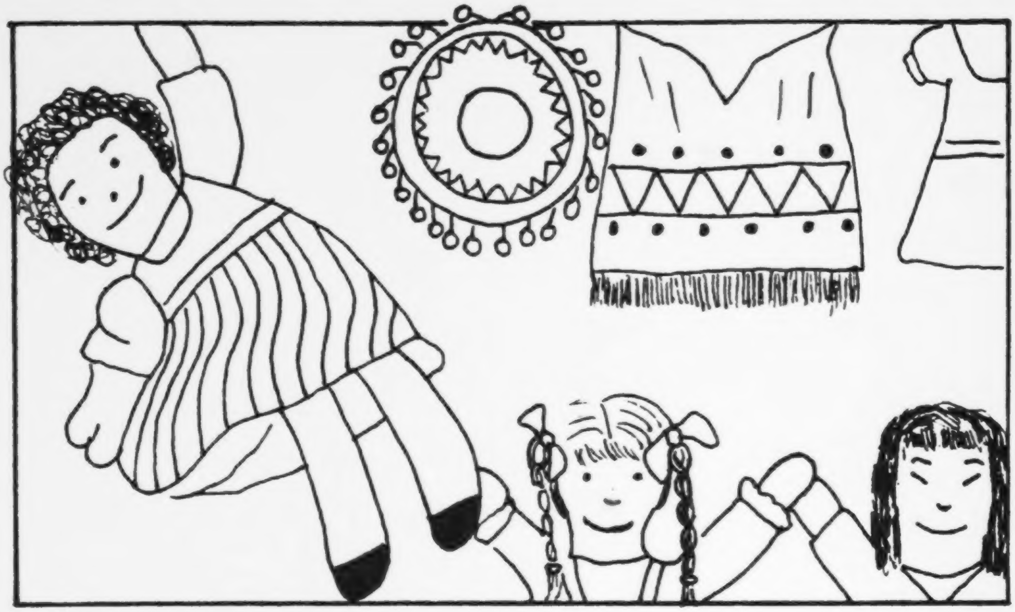
**Quiet Area** - This area can be an area for independent play. A child can choose from a number of materials. These materials can be kept on low shelves in containers.

Suggested Materials and Equipment

- carpet to sit or lie on
- puzzles, peg boards, lotto games, small blocks, dominoes, spools and buttons for stringing, boxes of buttons and other objects for sorting
- books and magazines (including books about different cultures, races, families and people with disabilities)
- paper and pencil for drawing

- Make the shelves low
- Children can learn independence by learning to replace materials where they belong
- Change the materials periodically so the children don't lose interest in the toys



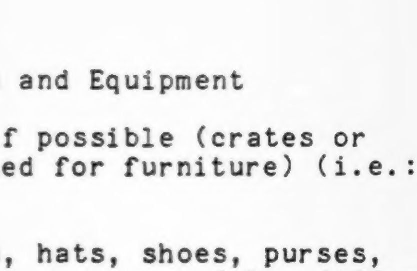


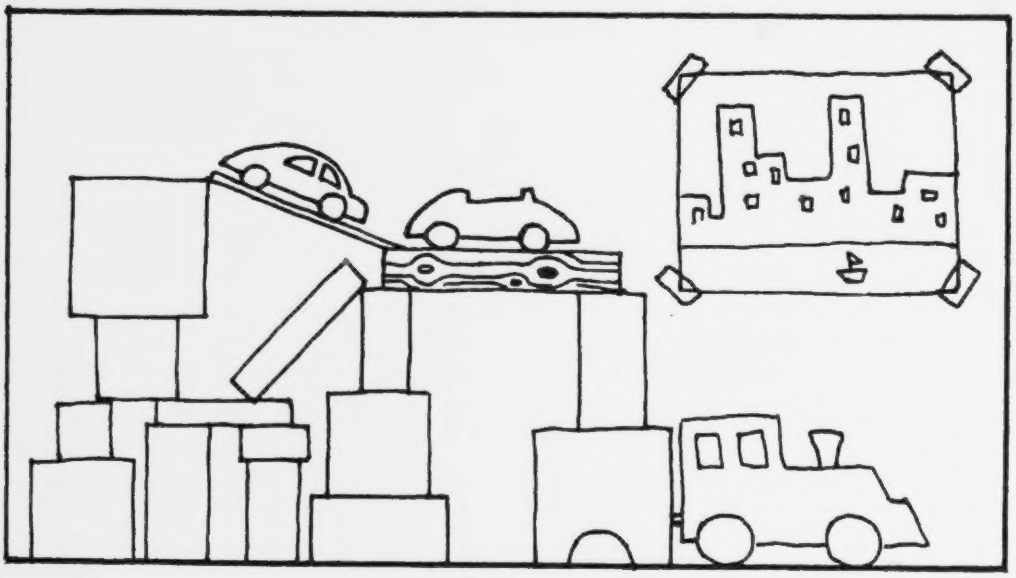
**House Courner** - Here the children can act out everyday situations. It encourages language and social skills.

Suggested Materials and Equipment

- Small tables and chairs if possible (crates or cardboard boxes can be used for furniture) (i.e.: baby bed, stove, etc.)
- Clothes such as: dresses, hats, shoes, purses, aprons, ties, jewelry, and scarves. (also different hats such as those used by firemen, policemen, sailors, etc.) (Clothes from different cultures)
- Dolls of different races, cultures and disabilities
- Odds and ends, kitchen utensils, pots and pans, broom, etc.
- Large nonbreakable mirror

Children learn a great deal through imaginary play!





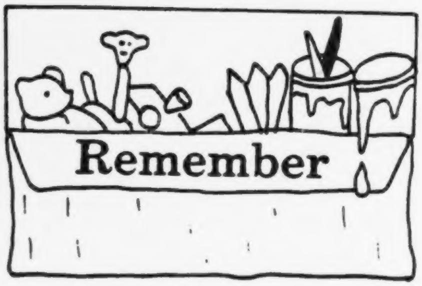
## Indoor Active Play Area -

In addition to an outdoor play area, it is advantageous to have an area inside for more physical activity.

Suggested Materials and Equipment

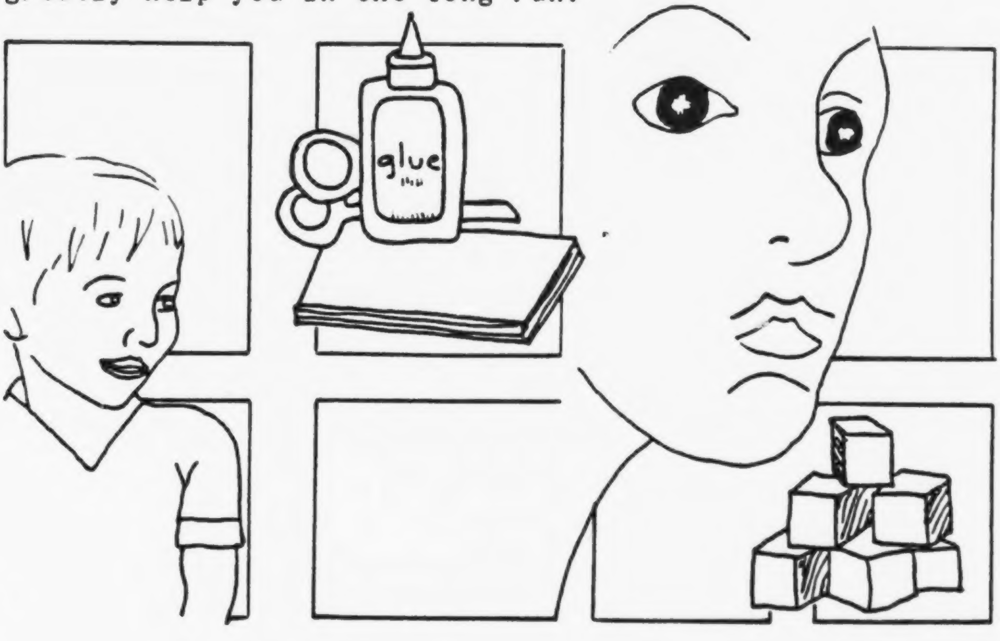
- Large building blocks (can also use cardboard blocks)
- Pieces of wood for bridges and ramps
- Small cars, trucks, animals
- Pictures of different scenes; buildings, trains, planes, etc. (including pictures from different countries)
- Small foam balls or bean bags

- Children have a great deal of energy
- Allow them an opportunity to use that energy



These are just a few suggestions in planning the arrangement of your home. Other areas to think about are those for eating and sleeping. And of course, you should consider an outdoor area, your backyard or a park nearby.

These are suggested areas. You may not have a great deal of space available. If that is the case, there are alternatives. You can use your kitchen table for your art and cooking area (for messy play). Your sofa can be used for quiet times and story time. Materials can be arranged on shelves and taken out for particular activities (i.e.: blocks, puzzles). Clothes and dolls can be placed in boxes. The children can learn to place the materials back when the activity is over. The way your organize and find ways of storing things will greatly help you in the long run.

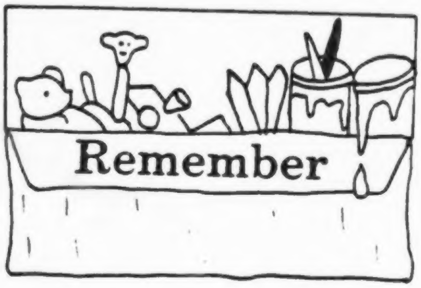


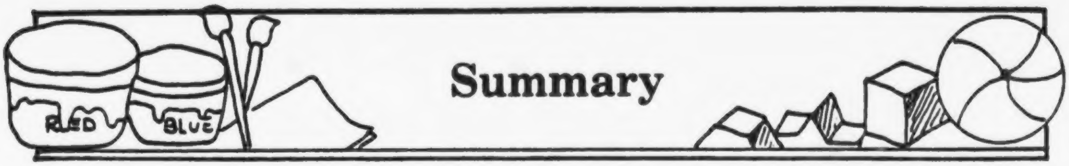
# Arranging spaces for infants

Many providers have children of different ages in their home and should consider their different needs when planning the environment. Prior to Terry's arrival, the children in my Family Day Care Home were older and therefore my house was arranged accordingly. However, with Terry's arrival, I needed to alter the environment somewhat in order to meet his developmental level and his infant needs. He needed space for crawling and certain manipulative toys that were appropriate for his age. In order for him to develop in a positive way, he needed to explore and yet be comfortable and safe. I created an area for him with materials I already had at home. I arranged a small corner of the room, making it cozy with a small rug and pillows. I put a nonbreakable mirror on the wall where he could look at himself. I put a wall hanging of colorful pieces of materials of different textures (i.e.: fake fur, silk). At first I made a little portable wall of cardboard boxes, about three feet high, in order to separate the space from the rest of the room. As Terry developed, I needed to adapt to his changes. Little by little, he needed more space for crawling. This was challenging for me but I knew he would learn and develop more quickly if he had the opportunity to explore. At first I had made some rattles and stuffed dolls and animals, and later I added busy boxes, spongy balls and pop beads. I had boxes for him to crawl through and to get in and out of. It was such a pleasure to watch him grow before my eyes.

In conclusion, we can see how important a child's environment can be. An environment that allows the child to explore will enhance the child's development. As we know, our job is to nurture and stimulate learning in children.

The arrangement of a Family Day Care Home should encourage exploration and learning for all the children, no matter what age or disability.





# Summary

In this chapter, we looked at how versatile one's home can be and how important it is to make the best use of space. You've learned that there are a lot of materials around the house that can be used to make fun toys for children and that one toy can be used to teach a variety of activities. The most important point to remember is that the environment you create for the children should be an environment that encourages exploration and learning.

# Activities

The following activities are ones that were done with Terry. The provider used mostly materials found around the house, such as boxes, soap, water, spools of thread, etc. These activities stimulate a variety of skills. They help a child of Terry's developmental level get to know himself and his environment.

**NOTES:** ______________________________________________

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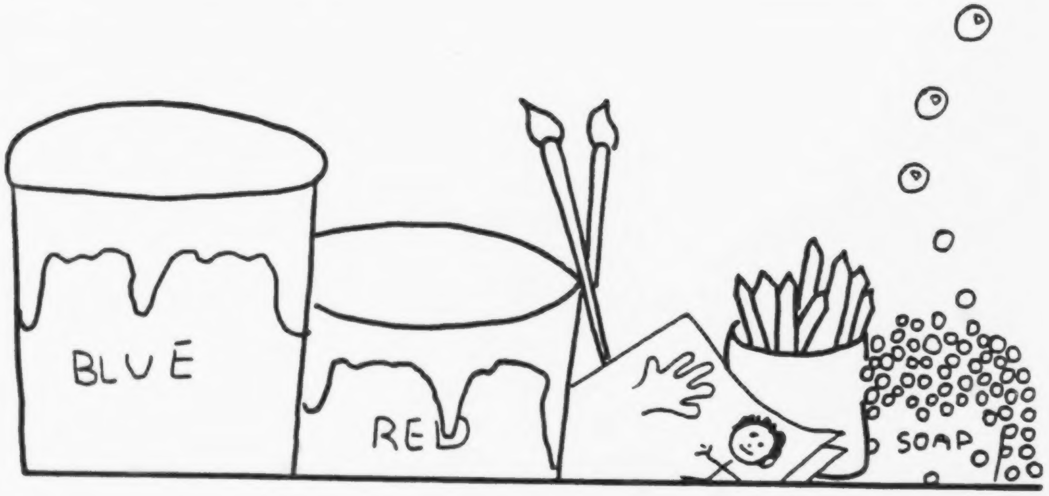


## Activity 1: Putting things in and dumping them out

**Area:** Thinking, and eyes and hands working together (Cognitive and eye hand coordination)

Pre-requisites: The child should be able to pick up small toys and let go of them without help, and to use both hands together - to lift a small container and turn it over or pull it over.

**Purpose:** To learn that boxes are for putting things in and dumping them out. Also to learn that toys still exist even if we can't see then, and that we can work to find them.

**Materials:** Any small box: oatmeal box, lunch pail, pan, etc., and small toys or objects: blocks, cars, spools from thread, spoons (small enough for the child to pick up, but large enough not to swallow)

**Procedures:**

1. With the child sitting alone on the floor or blanket, or placed in sitting in the corner of a couch - or lying on his or her side - caretaker puts some of the toys into the container, one by one, making noise to call child's attention.

2. When several are in the box, dump them out. (Baby may want to reach in and take them out - that's okay - just dump out what is left.) Smile and clap to show that dumping is a fun and good thing to do.

3. Let baby hold the box and explore it: put it to his mouth, on his head, bang with it, etc. Then, while he is holding it, drop another toy into it. He may decide he wants to drop things in. Great! Give him some and let him have at it. If not, put more in and then slowly dump it out. Put more in and wait. If he doesn't try to pick up toy box to dump, say "You dump it" or say the child's name "...dump it." Or say "Turn it over." If he still doesn't try, help him pick it up and turn it over. When it is dumped, smile and clap your hands and say "Yea!"

4. Keep putting things in and helping him dump as long as he enjoys the activity.

5. Give him some of the toys and wait. If he doesn't put them in the box, say "Drop it" or "Put it in." If he still doesn't put it in, help him bring the toy over the top of the box and drop it. If he wants to take it back out, or if he doesn't want to let go, that's okay, just let him play a while, then try again. When he drops it in, with or without your help, smile, clap your hands, and say his name and "...put it in!" or "...dropped it in!" And add "Good job!"

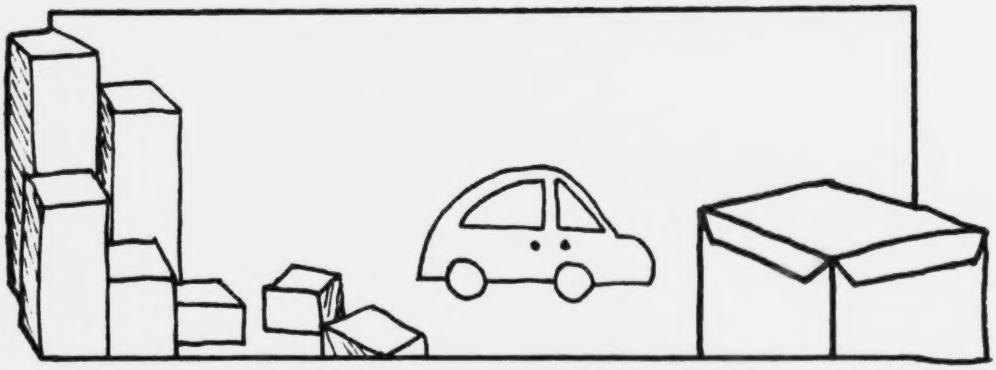
You may find him trying to take things out of drawers, dumping other boxes, and such. Help him put them back in. This teaches him to clean up messes, and in and out. Talk to him while you put them away, telling him you are putting the pots in the cupboard, etc.

**Suggestions:**

1. If the child cannot yet hold his head up, put him on his side, with his head and shoulders supported by a pillow so he can see into the box.

2. If he can only use one hand, let him pick up and drop in, then help him lift the box to dump it, but encourage him to use his weaker hand, too. Try to find a small box.

3. This can be done as a group activity, with each child getting their box and toys. Older children can help younger ones, and a game could be for one child to put all of the cars in her box, and another to put in all of the spoons. Everyone should clap for each child that gets things in and also when they dump.



## Activity 2: Pointing to body parts

| | |
|---|---|
| **Area:** | Getting to know herself; understanding simple words |
| **Pre-requisites:** | The child should be able to imitate movements and gestures she sees others do with their hands, and to understand simple questions and directions. |
| **Purpose:** | To help her learn that she has a body, and that her body parts have names. Also, to practice learning from watching and listening to others. |
| **Materials:** | None - just your bodies. (A mirror sometimes adds to the fun) |

**Procedures:**

1. First, decide which body part you will teach her first. The eyes and mouth are most noticeable so you might want to start with one of them. Be sure to do only one part at a time so she doesn't get confused.

2. With the child on your lap, facing you, or in a high chair, or on the floor facing you, with her face at approximately the same level, get her attention by talking or making noises. Then point to your eye and say "eye." Help her point to your eye, or touch your cheek just under your eye, or touch the corner of your eye and say again, "eye." Smile and say "That's right, eye." Do the same with your mouth.

3. Say her name and "...where's my eye?" Wait for her to respond. If she does not point to your eye, help her as in step 2. Smile and say "Good. You (or her name) found my eye."

4. Keep trying this until she can find your eye two or three times without help. Smile and congratulate her each time she does, with or without your help.

5. When she can find your eye, say "Where's Terry's eye?" using her name. Point to her eye, and say "There it is! There's Terry's eye!" Smile and congratulate her. Do this over again, giving her time to find her eye, and helping her if she can't. Smile and congratulate her each time.

6. When she has learned where her eye is located, and yours, you may start on another body part. Remember to go over the ones she already knows before teaching her a new one, so she won't forget.

**Suggestions:**

1. If the child cannot sit, this activity may be done with her in a supported sitting position, or she may be supported in half-lying, or on her side. If you try to do it while she is on her back, she may have trouble lifting her arms to point - gravity makes them heavier in that position.

2. This may also be done with a group, playing Simon Says, and he says to touch the body parts you are teaching, with older children helping the younger ones. Also, a mirror can make this more fun for older children. Directions can be "Close your eyes," "Open your mouth," "Clap your hands," etc., with smaller children learning from the older ones.

## Activity 3: Soaping hands

| | |
|---|---|
| **Area:** | Self-help |
| **Pre-requisites:** | The child should be able to hold her head up, to use her hands together, and to hold a small object in her hands. |
| **Purpose:** | To teach her she can do some things for herself, and help her feel she has accomplished something; to teach her how to take care of some of her needs. |
| **Materials:** | Soap, water (in a sink or basin), towel. |

**Procedures:**

1. Tell the child "Now we are going to wash hands," and take her to the sink or other water container. If you go to a sink, make sure she is able to reach the water - sitting on your lap or standing on a stool or chair. Turn the water on and help her get her hands wet. Be sure to tell her what you are doing, and what things are called.

2. Put the soap in her hands - help her hold it in both hands, and say her name and "...wash your hands." Help her rub the soap so it lathers, then put the soap back in its place. Help her rub her hands together. Then say, "That's good, Joy," (use her name) or "Good job."

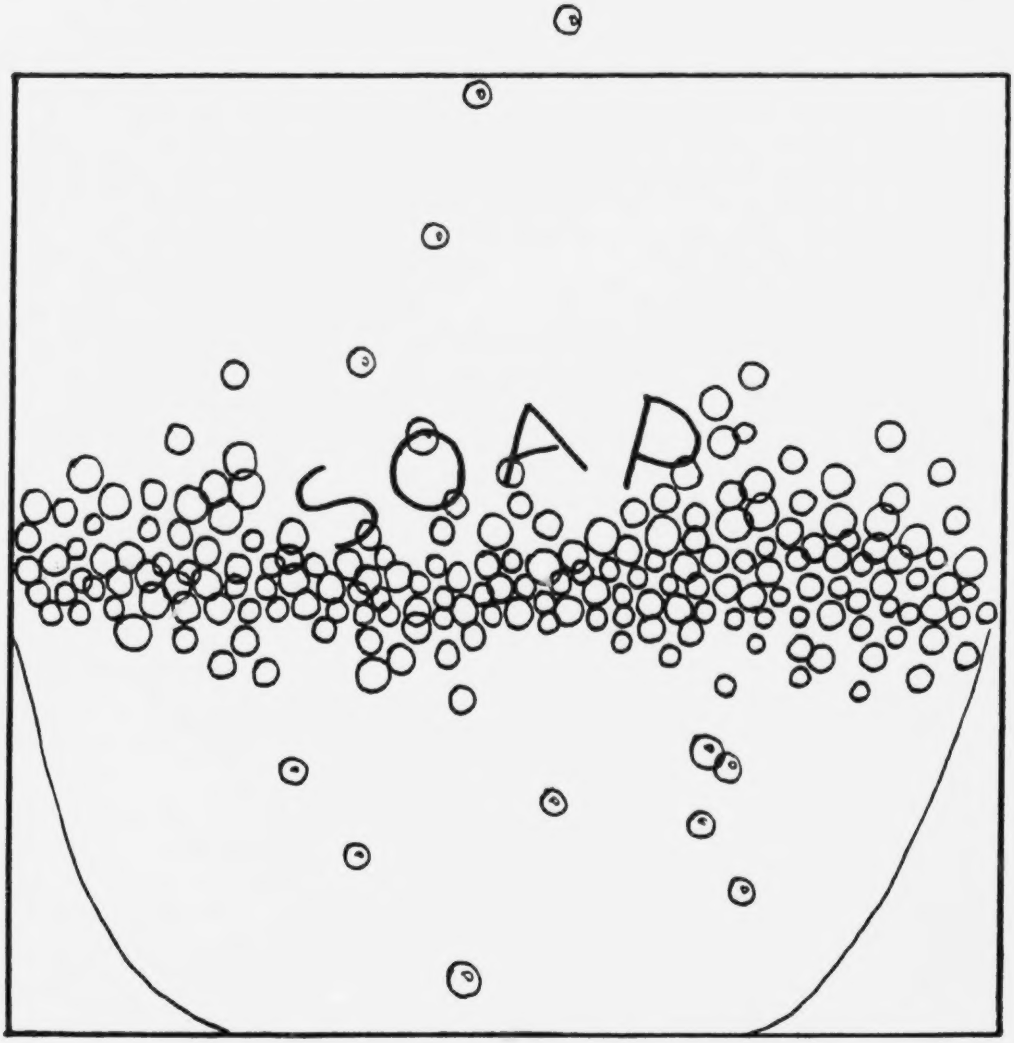
3. Help her rinse her hands in the water, then dry them. Tell her what a good job she did, and what a big girl she is.

This activity is best done at appropriate times, that is, when children usually wash their hands: before and after eating, after playing in dirt, at bath time, etc. Each time you do this with her, help her get her hands wet, and give her the soap. Tell her to wash or rub her hands, and let her try to rub them. Help her if she needs help, but let her do as much as she can, and little by little give her less and less help. Remember, the goal is just rubbing hands with soap, not the whole task of washing hands. However, as she gets older, and can do more, you can give her the opportunity to do more. If she wants to put the soap back, let her do that. Help her rinse. She may want to dry her hands herself -

that's great. As she gets more practice, she will get better at it, and will be ready to do more.

**Suggestions:**

1. If the child cannot stand or sit securely at the sink, sit her in her highchair or on the floor, and perform the activity in a large, shallow pan or basin.
2. If the child can only use one hand, hold the soap in your hand and let her rub her hand against it. Help her bring her weaker hand to the water to soap and wash it, too.



## Activity 4: Pushing objects

**Area:** Body movement (Motor)

**Pre-requisites:** The child should be able to stand holding on to something and take steps.

**Purpose:** To help the child improve her balance, and help her feel more independence in walking.

**Materials:** Large cardboard box, chest- or waist-high on the child; cans and boxes of food, books, or other medium to heavy objects to place in the bottom of the box in order to stabilize it; lots of floor space.

**Procedures:**

1. With the box weighted down so it won't turn over, help the child stand up holding on to one side of the box. Push it a little, so she takes a few steps and say her name and "...push it," or "...walk," or "...go bye-bye." Smile and clap when she takes a few steps, with or without your help.
2. If she tries to push, but can't move the box, take out some of the weight. Canned or boxed food is good to use, because you can pretend to go shopping.
3. If she cries or seems afraid, don't force her to push. Just let her stand holding on to the box and get used to it. Let her explore the box, and sit down if she wants to. You push the box to show her it is safe and fun. Let her pull to stand, holding on to the box. When she seems comfortable with it, try to push it again, just a little. If she enjoys the activity, help her by pushing, and then let her do it herself.

**Suggestions:**

1. In a group of children, a small wagon can be used, and turns taken pushing each other around in it. Be careful the wagon does not roll away from her and let her fail. Children could also take turns with the box, but giving rides in the box will soon destroy it.

## Activity 5: Jello Play

**Area:** The senses (touching and exploring)

**Pre-requisites:** The child should be able to hold his head up, in sitting and to move his hands and arms, and to grasp.

**Purpose:** To help develop the sense of touch

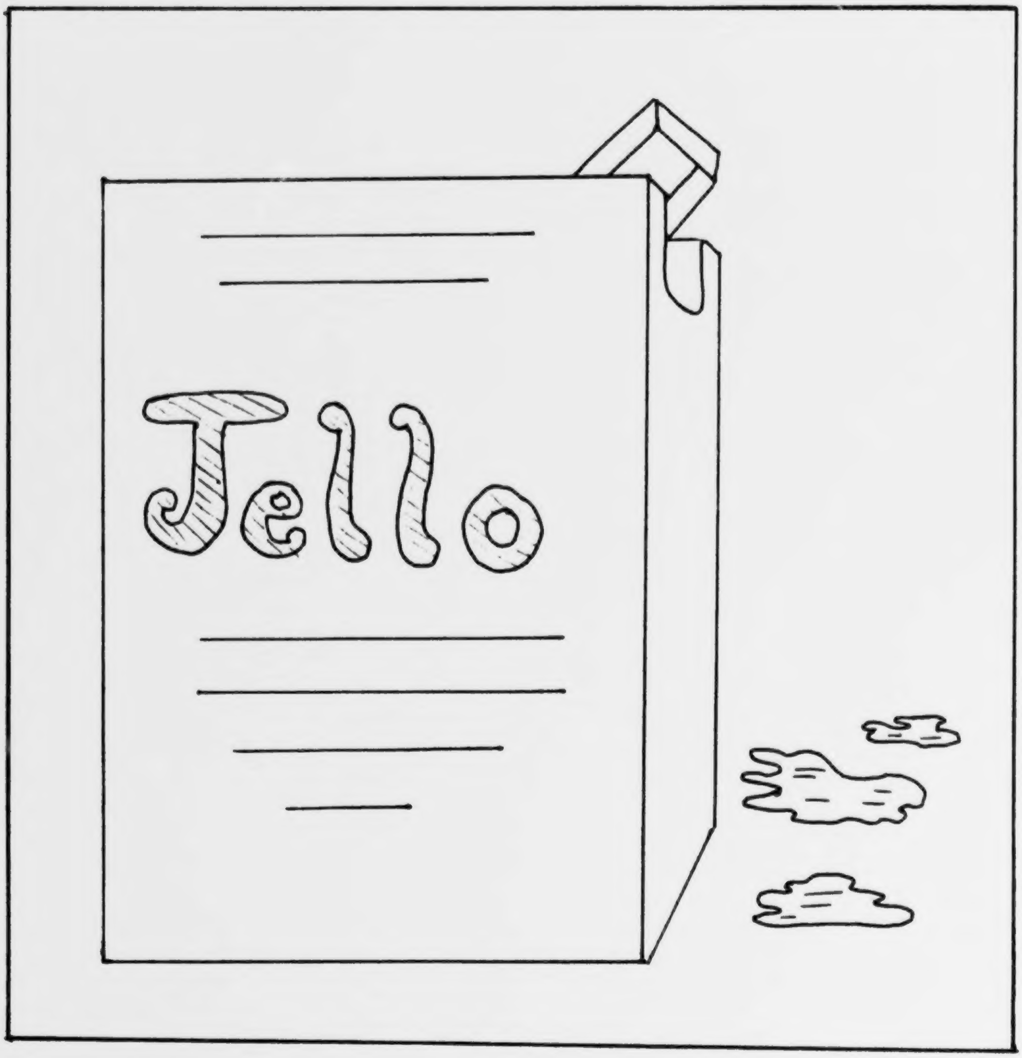
**Materials:** Floor or table space, plastic to cover the floor or table space; jelled jello or pudding, or whipped cream, or other similar food (mashed potatoes, etc.) - any or all of the above.

**Procedures:**

1. With the plastic covering the floor or table, sit the child down and support him if necessary. He should be unclothed or have only a diaper on.
2. Offer him a bowl of jello and help him reach in and touch it. Tell him what it is.
3. Help him squish the food in his hands - you may need to demonstrate. Let him play in it as he pleases. Encourage him to get both hands in, or put some out onto the plastic.
4. Put some on his foot. Let him put some on his arm, his face, etc. Talk to him about where the jello is ("It's on your arm. Now you're putting it on your foot." etc.)
5. Let him play now, as he wants to - eating it, putting it in his hair (you may want to do this right before bath and nap time). Show him he can "paint" with it on the plastic. Let him play for as long as he likes.

If he does not enjoy the activity, don't force him to do too much at first. Just help him touch it in the bowl, or on the plastic. Allow him to get used to it slowly, but try a little at a time to put some on parts of his body. Don't do much the first time, but keep presenting him the activity from time to time, until he can feel comfortable following all five steps.

**Note:** When children start to feed themselves, it is very natural for them to want to play with their food, and they enjoy being messy. If you feel this activity has influenced the child to play with his food more, and you don't want the mess, you can tell him, when he starts to play in his food, that you can tell he wants to play in the jello and that we will do it later. Then give him that experience. He will soon learn that messy play is for the "Jello," and not for table food. It is also not advisable to perform this activity in the child's highchair, or at the place where he usually eats, so he will not generalize to this kind of play with his food.



# Discipline: Positive Strategies

# 6

# Introduction

How often have you encountered a child that was difficult to manage? It can become very frustrating. People working with children, including parents, have been faced, at one time or another, with the dilemma of dealing with a behavior problem. It is a challenge to find what are the best techniques to use. Janine, a Family Day Care Home Provider, shares her experience with Jacob, a child with behavior problems. For her, discipline was a way to reinforce good behavior. She used the appropriate techniques of positive reinforcement and of setting consistent and clear limits.

When reading this chapter, look for the answers to these questions:

- Why is it important that parents and providers work together in finding and implementing appropriate disciplining techniques?
- How should a provider be honest with herself when disciplining?
- Why is setting limits an important aspect of discipline?
- What are the benefits of ignoring inappropriate behavior and praising or rewarding appropriate behavior?

# Jacob and Janine

At two and a half, Jacob was full of energy, bright and inquisitive, and very verbal. He loved to tell me about the things he did over the weekend, was interested in new things that were brought into the classroom, and liked to play outside. But when things got rough, Jacob was unable to put his skills to good use. He got angry easily and struck out at the other children, and sometimes at adults too. When he felt especially threatened, he would bite, throw things, cry and scream.

I was confused by his erratic behavior; he could be so loving and calm one minute, and the next minute, be wrestling someone to the floor. Setting him out or talking to him didn't really seem to do much to help him stop his aggressive behavior.

Of course, Jacob's parents were very concerned too. They came to meetings with me, tried to talk to him at home, and supported me in my efforts to discipline him. Mostly they were confused. Their son was so bright and verbal, why was he having so much trouble getting along in day care?

About this time, the parents decided to visit a program specialized in working with children with special needs. The program recommended a special education teacher to come and work with Jacob. She specialized in working with children like Jacob.

The first thing the specialist did was to talk with all adults involved with Jacob. She asked lots of questions from the people who knew him so well. Second, she observed him inside my home, outside on the playground, taking walks with his day care friends, and when his parents picked him up in the evening. Third, everyone involved had a meeting with her. The specialist shared her observations and asked if what she had observed was typical of Jacob's behavior. (There is always a chance that an observer will not see typical things; in that case, more observation is necessary.) The parents and I agreed with the specialist's observations and so we proceeded to discuss a plan of action to help Jacob.

## How we helped Jacob

Jacob needed a lot of support. He needed the adults to anticipate when he was going to have a problem with someone and to intervene even before anything happened. He needed, from me and his parents, firm and consistent directions, given to him in a clear, concise manner. Most of all, he needed praise and positive reinforcement when he was able to keep his hands, feet, and face to himself and respond to others in a socially appropriate way. He learned that if he asked for help, he got it, and that he didn't have to act out to get the attention he needed.

Jacob needed help in asking for things, telling other children what he wanted to do, sharing toys. (Children at this age, of course, don't really share. They can, however, be helped to take turns.) In our activities, Jacob learned to say things like, "It's my turn now," "I don't like it when you take my things," "I'm feeling sad now," "Please pay attention to me." When he learned to express more of his feelings, wants, and needs through words instead of through inappropriate actions, he got more positive feedback from his teachers, his parents, and from the other children.

Jacob's behavior improved tremendously and quickly when all the adults in his environment were working together, setting clear and firm limits, and providing appropriate consequences (such as missing out on an activity, losing a turn during a game, sitting quietly for a minute or two). Consistency in Jacob's life both at home and in day care helped Jacob learn what was appropriate behavior for him.

# Honesty with oneself when disciplining

At first, I would sometimes lose my patience with Jacob. I realized that when I raised my voice, I gave him the attention he wanted. I was only reinforcing his negative behavior. I had to look at my own feelings and ask myself, "Why do I want to change his behavior? Is it because I want to help him or to make things easier for myself?" Initially I realized it was for my convenience but soon I changed my ways. I was there to help Jacob.

Another question I asked myself was, "Am I frustrated with him or with his behavior?" I realized I needed to separate one from the other in order to concentrate on the child's needs rather than just the behavior. Whenever I observed Jacob's nervousness, I would intervene. Instead of reacting negatively to his behavior, I would see his needs and direct his nervous energy towards something that would be a positive experience for him (i.e., help me set the table, clean up, etc.).

So, remember, ask yourself, when dealing with behaviors:

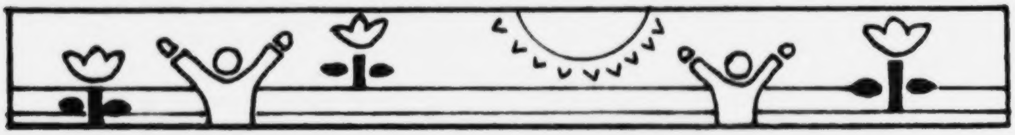
- Do I want to change this child's behavior for my benefit or for the benefit of the child?
- Am I looking at the child's needs or at the child's behavior?

# Setting limits

From my experience with Jacob, I learned a great deal about how important it is to set limits. Setting limits lets the children know what is expected of them. Setting limits can safeguard their physical safety. "We walk inside, we run outside." Setting limits can also help us shape a child's behavior. "When you finish your drawing, go and choose a book to read." These are cues that let the children know what exactly is expected of them.

An important ingredient when setting limits is to always be consistent. Don't tell them one thing and then something different a minute later. If you keep changing the "rules," the children will get confused and will not understand what you are expecting from them.

As we saw with Jacob, one needed to be consistent with him. As a result, he grew to understand what was acceptable behavior. He knew what he was supposed to do because I had given him the same "rules" all the time. I set him up for positive behavior.



# Other pointers in dealing with behavior

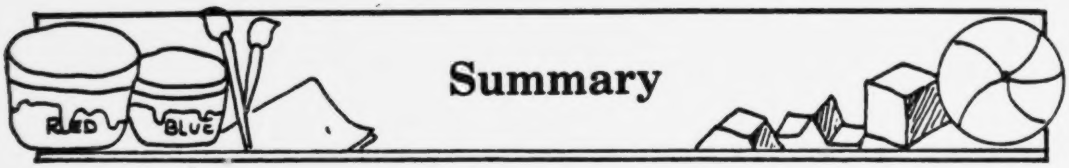
There are three good pointers to keep in mind when trying to shape and improve behavior.

- **Ignore inappropriate behavior;**
- **Praise and reinforce appropriate behavior;**
- **Substitute an appropriate behavior for a negative one.**

Because of Jacob's negative behavior, he had come to expect "reprimand" as attention. Because he received the attention he wanted when he did something inappropriate, he became conditioned to act accordingly. To change his "acting out" behavior, we ignored as much as possible those negative behaviors. He was no longer receiving attention for them.

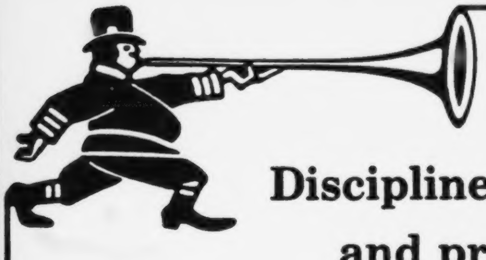
By ignoring Jacob's inappropriate behavior, I was able to give him the attention he wanted when he behaved appropriately. Anytime I caught him doing something positive, I was sure to praise him immediately. For example, if he would ask for something he wanted, say "thank you" or sit and listen, I would praise him and give him that attention. It was giving him attention for something positive. He slowly began understanding that to get attention, he had to work in a positive way to receive it. I helped him by teaching him to use his words (vocalize his demands). When he was angry, he received attention from me when he was able to say, "I'm angry. He took my toy. I wanted to play with it." He was immediately rewarded when he used his words.

I also learned to substitute enticing and rewarding experiences for Jacob in order to help him avoid a negative situation. For example, if Jacob, through his nervousness, indicated to me that he needed more attention at the time, I would let him help me. I would give him the duty of setting the table or arranging the chairs. This way he was directed away from a possible problem and directed towards something that would make him feel important. He would also receive praise for his good



# Summary

The key to healthy discipline is consistency. Let that child know what you expect and be sure to remember to praise the child when he behaves appropriately. Encourage the parents to do the same thing. Do not let feelings of pity or sadness get in the way of disciplining a child with disabilities. That child has as much of a right and need to receive appropriate limit setting and discipline as any other child. Changing negative behaviors are hard to do and require time and patience. Your commitment to the child will help you and the child towards success.



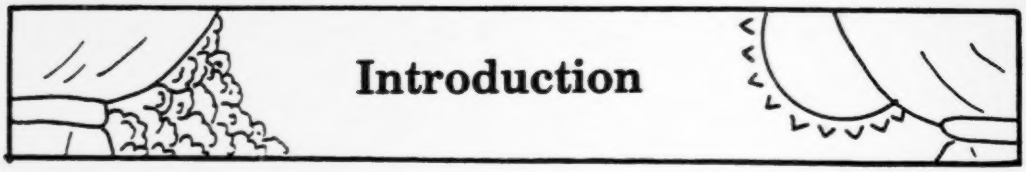
# Discipline techniques for planning and presenting an activity

For a child like Jacob, any age, a developmentally appropriate activity is good to plan. We are not presenting activities but a number of techniques for you to consider when planning or implementing an activity for a child with behavior problems. Consider these pointers:

- Keep your directions simple.
- Set firm and consistent guidelines or "rules" and let the child know what they are.
- Provide the structure a child needs; children such as Jacob thrive on it.
- Keep the routine consistent; if it must be changed, give the child some warning, talk about the changes, and be there near the child to provide support.
- Remember to praise the child when his behavior is appropriate.
- Learn to intervene before there is a problem.
- Decide what the consequences will be for failing to follow directions.
- Keep the consequences short and sensitive.
- And for yourself, remember...
  - Share your frustration with another adult; don't take it out on the child.
  - Remember that change takes time - the child did not lose control overnight and will not learn to behave more appropriately overnight, either.
  - Reap the rewards and benefits of your program; you are helping to make the child better able to get along with others.

# Including the Child with Special Needs in Group Activities

# 7



# Introduction

**There are many benefits** in placing a child with special needs into a Family Day Care Home. This experience gives children with special needs a chance to play with other children and offers them an opportunity to help each other.

When a provider decides to care for a child with special needs, she is faced with a challenging and rewarding experience. She must look at the ways that she will incorporate her activities to include a variety of ages as well as the different needs of each child. She must ask herself too how she will include that child with special needs in her activities. She must also set an example to the other children in her interactions with that child with special needs, modeling an attitude of positiveness and acceptance of that child. As we know, children model our behaviors.

Maxine was a Family Day Care Home Provider who was flexible and determined to incorporate Dean, a child with special needs, into her Family Day Care Home. In her home, she created a positive atmosphere of cooperation and acceptance. Maxine shares her ideas on how she included Dean in activities with the other children. There are many good pointers to be learned from her experience.

While reading this chapter, look for the answers to the following questions:

- What is an individual approach when working with children?
- In an activity, how can a provider include children of different developmental levels and different needs?
- How can a provider set a positive example for children while guiding them towards a healthy acceptance of a child with special needs and of differences in each other?

# Dean and Maxine

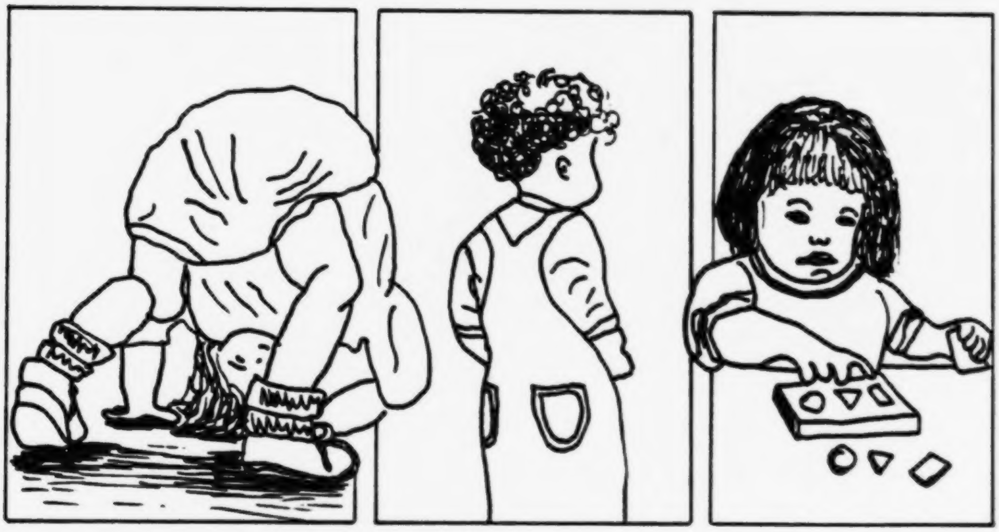
There were four other children in my Family Day Care Home when Dean began. At the time, Dean had delays in motor, speech and social development. The other children in the group were at different levels of development. Two children were close in age to Dean and two were a bit older. The greatest differences between Dean and the remainder of the group can be summarized as follows.

| Group | Dean |
|---|---|
| Play: Two of the children were at the stage of parallel play (playing close to each other and observing other's activities.) Two other children were already at the stage of cooperative play. | Dean was still at the stage of solitary play. He would repeatedly move away from the other children. |
| Assertiveness: Two of the younger children would fight over toys or take or keep possession of favorite items. The two older children were adept at protecting their turf and learning to share. | Dean did not try to take toys from the others and would yield when others took things from him. |
| The two children close to Dean's age were demonstrating an initial use of language to have needs met and to control others behavior (i.e.: NO!) The other two children were speaking in complete sentences. | Dean used no words. His language was limited to some gestures and sounds. |

The rest of the group was increasingly independent. They had strong desires in self-help activities such as washing hands, feeding, wiping tables.

Dean would cling to me. He would get upset frequently during transitions between different areas and activities.

The differences between Dean and the group, while substantial, were not, as we shall see, impossible to overcome. Through my experience with Dean, I learned a great deal about adapting my activities to the differences and needs of each child. It strengthened my ability to nurture in the children healthy attitudes about their differences.



# An individualized approach

Let me begin by saying that Dean was a child with the same needs as other children. The only difference was that he was developmentally behind other children his own age. And my attitude towards him was no different from my attitude towards the other four children. I saw each child as an individual with different needs. I observed Dean's needs, as described above, and developed a set of goals for him parallel to the rest of the group. Whenever possible I tried to:

- Meet the needs of each child as an individual;
- Develop increasing interaction between Dean and the rest of the group;
- Use similar materials.

Dean needed stimulation in gross motor, cognitive (thinking), language and social interaction skills. While observing and planning for all of these areas, our starting point was Dean's single greatest need, gross motor development. Without the ability to move about and interact with the other children, Dean would have little chance to use language or social skills.

To assist Dean in his motor functioning, I composed a list of activities (through the help of an occupational therapist). In order to develop his ability to move around with more confidence in his environment, I planned to have him experience movement over a variety of surfaces: mattresses, pillows, carpeting, sand, inclined planes and stairs. These activities would help him improve his upper and lower body mobility. However, Dean was initially reluctant to perform these movements. To overcome his reluctance, I looked for items and activities in which Dean took an interest. I found that he was eager to play with balls, and would spend a great deal of time throwing, kicking, rolling and balancing them. To overcome his reluctance to do the motor activities I had planned, I combined the motor improvement activities with ball play. By placing and throwing balls of various sizes onto different surfaces, Dean would participate in these activities. The other children could participate in this activity as well. The result was fun and positive for all.

A second feature of the gross motor curriculum was to encourage Dean to dance. Again, I combined activities which Dean initially resisted (in this case turning from side to side) with an interest in music. I noticed during his first days in my home that Dean would stop and listen to music. At first I prompted him to move his body to the music. Once he had become adept at this, I encouraged him to hold hands and move along with the other children. At this point other children in the group were beginning or had begun to initiate dancing with each other. In dancing with other children, Dean learned to accommodate to the movements of others -as well as his own. From this activity, Dean began to initiate the language and social interactions of the other children.

Six months after his arrival, Dean actively sought other children to dance and play with. He had also learned how to ask me, using gestures, to play music, give him a ball to throw and assist him with other activities.

As you can see, I looked at Dean's needs and interests and planned activities around those needs and interests. They were activities where the other children could benefit and in which they could participate. I looked at him as an individual as well as an integral part of the group.

- Individualize and modify an activity so that all the children can take part in the activity.
- Look at each child as an individual.
- When appropriate, select activities that encourage the children to play and learn together.

# Ways to include children of different developmental levels

An "individualized approach" does not mean setting a child apart from a group. On the contrary, it means looking at each child individually and adapting your approaches to the developmental levels of that child.

One of the goals for my children is that they understand to respect each other's strengths and weaknesses. I used simple methods such as: cooperative learning and children helping children. I also structured my activities so that the child with disabilities could participate.

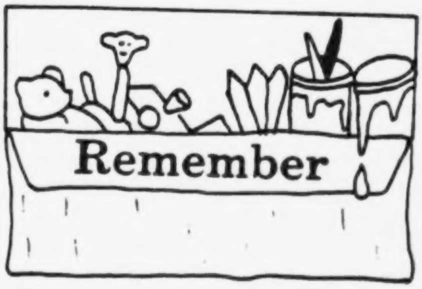
By "children helping children," I mean using the children as models for each other. We all know how "peer interaction" is valuable in a child's learning. After Dean began interacting with his peers, he began to imitate them and learn from them. Children interacting and helping each other pave a road towards mutual acceptance. An older child could help Dean by aiding him walk up steps and repeating my words to encourage him to climb the steps alone, or, during a transition, take him by the hand to the table. These experiences help develop positive attitudes about each other.

Cooperative learning provides children an opportunity to play and learn together, while respecting each other's abilities. It promotes the inclusion of children with special needs into a large group activity where the child will not feel different or less capable.

It is up to the provider to adapt her expectations to the individual capabilities of each child. When doing a group activity, remember to:

- Structure the activity so that the child with special needs can take part in the activity;
- Adapt the tasks so that each child can succeed.

For example, Dean's style of play changed through his successful experiences with other children. He was no longer content to remain alone and sought out the other children. He became more confident as time went on. The confidence came from feeling success while participating in group activities. My expectations of Dean were different from my expectations of the other children. I might expect one child to follow my directions while allowing Dean more freedom to explore. At one time I might expect one child to verbally ask for something and Dean to use gestures to ask for something. Later I might expect one child to use two or three word sentences while expecting Dean to use one word sentences to communicate. Allowing for those differences encourages the children to develop at their own pace. Soon Dean would increase his vocabulary and be able to join in or initiate conversation. Adapting my expectations to each child's capabilities allowed Dean to grasp some of the potential he has as an individual. This growth in emotional development led Dean to take on my goals of movement, language and social interactions as his own. "Cooperative learning" and "Children helping children" allowed him to grow at his own pace and to develop the potential he had in him.



- "Children helping children" and "Cooperative learning" provides children the opportunity to play and learn together, while respecting each other's different abilities.
- Structure your activities so that the child with special needs can take part in the activity.
- Modify the activities so that all can experience success. This will promote self-esteem in the children.

# Your attitude will affect the attitudes of the children

Through my years as a provider, I have come to realize that my attitude towards a child shapes the way the other children interact with that child.

I once had a child that had some behavior problems. At the beginning I was very frustrated with her and it showed in my behavior towards her. I excluded her from many activities. I soon found the other children imitating my behavior and complaining constantly about the child. She would be blamed for a problem by the other children even when she was not involved. When I realized what was happening I began to change my attitude and behavior towards the child. It took a great deal of honesty with myself. I learned from that experience and now I try to always read my feelings toward a child and make sure to treat him or her as any other child in my home.

When Dean came to my home, I made an effort to set the scene in a positive way, ensuring that my attitude was a healthy and positive one. I made certain my expectations were realistic. In preparing the children for Dean's arrival, I focused on similarities rather than differences. I tried to answer questions honestly and comfortably.

I realize that it is important for providers to understand children. Children may ask questions and we must respond in an appropriate way. As children get older, they begin to see things and want to know "why," "what," etc. They begin observing differences as well.

For example, one day one of the children in my home asked about Dean. He said, "I can run faster than Dean." I answered, "Yes you can. Some people can run fast and some run slowly. And that's all right."

Suppose a child asks about another child with braces, "Why does she wear those things?" What would you say? A good beginning would be, "Those are braces. They help her when she walks." Another suggestion would be to repeat the question to the child and ask him to try to answer it himself before answering it for him.

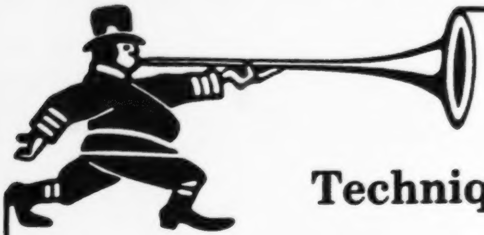
These questions will most likely happen at one time or another. To help you answer them, here are a few tips.

- Be honest and clear in your answers.
- Remember the age of the child asking the question.
- Respect both the child that asks the question and the child with the disability.
- Reinforce acceptance of the differences.
- Promote the positive attitude.

# Summary

When accepting a child with special needs such as Dean, the other children should be guided in accepting him into the group. Since children model behaviors - both negative and positive - it is very important that you see them all as individuals with their own unique capabilities. Your acceptance and respect of their differences create in them a positive attitude towards themselves and others.

Maxine included Dean in as many activities as possible, while thinking of the individual needs of each child. When appropriate, she had children helping Dean and each other. Because of these positive experiences, all the children could feel good about themselves and accept their differences.



# Techniques for group activities

Since the theme of this chapter is including a child with special needs in group activities, this section will give you some pointers for the time when children of different developmental levels and different needs do an activity together.

An enticing activity that many children of all ages enjoy is story time. This activity enhances their attention skills and listening skills, and it promotes language development and social development. Lunch or snack time is another excellent time for socialization and language development. Trips to the zoo or in the neighborhood are fun for all the children. Music and dancing times are great fun too.

When considering an activity for the group, there are several pointers that will aid you in your making the activity fun for each child. Remember to:

- **Plan your activity**

  Plan your activities ahead of time. Look at the individual needs of the children. Go over the activity in your mind, trying to identify any potential difficulty.

- **Prepare the children**

  Prepare the children for a quiet or more active activity. Explain to them what they will be asked to do. If needed, give them verbal directions and demonstrate to them what they are expected to do. (i.e.: First we will wash our hands, then we will sit in our chairs, etc.)

- **Routines can be established**

  Since many of these activities will be done often, the children can learn through practice what is expected of them in a particular activity. For example, during story time they know they must sit on their little mats or in a circle on the floor, etc. By following certain routines and rules consistently, the children will function more effectively as a group.

- **Make the activity enticing**

  If you are reading a story, try using different voices, make faces or use puppets to tell a story. If taking a trip through the neighborhood, let the children ask questions. Ask them questions. Encourage the curiosity in what they see, hear, feel and smell.

- **Look at the individual needs of the children**

  Take time to know the skills of each child and what motivates them. Modify the activities to suit the needs. For example in a story time, one child may be able to remember the name of the characters without looking at the pictures while another child may only be able to say "dog" when you show him/her the picture. Adapt your expectations to those individual skills of each child. For example, a younger child may sit in your lap and help you turn pages while an older child may summarize the story.

- **Allow children to help you and each other**

  During snack time allow the children to set the tables, serve or clean up. Also have the children help each other or the child with special needs. A child can help another child walk to the table, go upstairs or encourage him/her by repeating your words of praise.

# Approaches for different handicapping conditions

The following are suggested approaches for different handicapping conditions.

**Hearing Problems**

- Place the child so that the child can watch your face. If he is little, place yourself at his level. When in a group activity place him in front.
- When you are speaking to him, make sure that he is looking at you.
- Be patient and explain things to him. Give him visual cues when needed.
- If the child wears a hearing aid, learn how it functions so as to be able to help him when necessary.
- Give him support but don't overprotect him. He needs to learn independence.

**Visual Problems**

- Your voice can guide the child. Give him clear explanations and directions.
- Make sure there is adequate lighting and in group activities place him in front of you.
- Speak in a normal voice!
- Explain situations that are occurring around the child. Be descriptive!
- Promote independence. Let him try to do things by himself. (i.e.: dress, wash, clean, eat, etc.) Give him positive reinforcement for trying.

**Speech Problems**

- Be patient and listen to the child. Promote the child's talking by asking questions.
- Give the child immediate positive reinforcement when the child expresses himself. This will give him more confidence to try again.
- Encourage the child by modeling for him. For pronunciation, repeat the word after the child has tried to pronounce it.

- Also, model sentences for him, increasing the length (i.e.: The child says "more milk." You can say "John, you want more milk.")
- Speak in clear sentences.

**Orthopedic Handicaps**

- Make sure the child is in a comfortable position before attempting the activity.
- If necessary, have adaptive furniture available for the child. (This can be discussed with the parents.)
- Understand the function of the equipment a child uses.
- Promote and reinforce independence. Give him the time to perform his tasks in an activity. Reinforce with praise.

# Summary

Throughout these pages you have read about different providers and their experiences with special needs children. Their successes were not achieved in a day. Often it takes hard and repetitive work, patience and determination on the part of both the provider, the parents and the child. It may take days or weeks for a child to learn a simple task. You may encounter times of frustration, anger and even sadness. Remember you are not alone in feeling these emotions. They are normal feelings. Your honesty with yourself, your willingness to learn and be open to new ideas as well as your dedication to children will help you with these moments of uncertainty. You will learn through your experiences to gain satisfaction from even the simplest of accomplishments of a child. A child rolls over for the first time. Another child says a new word. These may seem so simple yet they are so important to the child, the parents and you. They are small steps towards helping that child reach his full potential. You as a provider with your dedication to children can make it happen.

## A word on the Appendix

The following appendix was developed for your convenience. You will find a summary of the points to remember from each of the chapters. A section is presented on how to use the activities in this handbook. A glossary of terms, a description of the areas of development and a chart of the developmental milestones are also included. In addition, an explanation of the specialists and what they do has been presented. A list of resources offers some books and organizations that can give you information and new insight in your work with special needs children.

# Appendix

# Summary of points to remember

**CHAPTER 1**

**Initial expectations:**

- Get to know a child first before forming a total picture of the child.
- Fears and doubts are normal feeling but need to be accompanied with honesty with one's self.
- Feelings and attitudes can affect one's relationship with a child.

**When a child begins:**

- Be sensitive to the child's needs.
- Don't pressure the child.
- Allow him to explore.
- Set the child up for success.
- Give him activities he can do.
- Give him time to adapt.
- Take time to observe him.

**Looking at the whole child, not the disability:**

- Children with special needs are children first.
- Children learn at their own pace.
- Your role is to offer them a positive, enriching environment that will allow children to grow to their fullest potential.

**CHAPTER 2**

**When choosing a time for an activity:**

- Read the child's mood.
- Select the right activity whether it be active or low key.

- Select the right moment.
- Be flexible.

**When planning activities for a child:**

- Observe where the child is developmentally.
- Know what the child is capable and not capable of doing.
- Know what skills are needed to do the activity.
- Match (adapt) the activity to the skills the children have.
- Sequence your activities.
- Break down the tasks into small steps.
- Remember that a child learns through repetition.
- Make the activities fun and enticing.
- Setting the child up for success will add to a child's self-esteem and will give a child confidence to face new challenges.

## CHAPTER 3

**Preparing for an activity:**

- Plan your activities.
- Have your materials ready.
- Make sure the room is well lit.
- Make sure there are no distractions.
- Make sure the children are comfortable and ready for the activity.
- Be aware of how long the child will attend to the activity.
- Make the activity short and simple.

**Positive reinforcement nurtures successful learning:**

- Praise should be meaningful.

- Show enthusiasm.
- Ask yourself what type of reinforcement the child likes.
- Be consistent.

## CHAPTER 4

**The meaning of play to children:**

- Children are experts at play.
- Play is an integral part of their world.
- Be a part of their world of play.

**Children learn through play:**

- Through play, children explore their environments.
- Play enhances a child's development in all areas: social/emotional, cognitive, self-help and motor.

**You can help children learn through play:**

- Activities are fun if introduced in enticing and creative ways.
- Use your body, voice and facial expressions in playful ways when working with children.

## CHAPTER 5

**Toys for children:**

- Think about the materials around your house that can be used with the children.
- Toys can be versatile.
- One toy can be used for more than one activity.
- One toy can be used to develop a variety of skills.

**Arranging your home:**

- Be organized.
- Plan your spaces and create storage areas.

- Children can learn independence by learning to replace materials where they belong.

- The environment that you create should encourage exploration and learning for all the children.

## CHAPTER 6

**When dealing with discipline, ask yourself:**

- Do I want to change this child's behavior for my benefit or for the benefit of the child?

- Am I looking at the child's needs or at the child's behavior?

**When wanting to improve behavior:**

- Ignore inappropriate behavior.

- Praise and reinforce appropriate behavior.

- Substitute an appropriate behavior for a negative one.

## CHAPTER 7

**Individual approach to children:**

- Individualize and modify an activity so that all the children can take part in the activity.

- Look at each child as an individual in each group.

- When appropriate, select activities that encourage the children to play and learn together.

**Including children of different developmental levels:**

- "Children helping children" and "cooperative learning" provide children the opportunity to play and learn together, while respecting each other's different abilities.

- Structure your activities so that the child with special needs can take part in the activity.

- Modify the activities so that all can experience success.

# How to use the activities

At the end of each chapter a group of activities are presented. Each introductory page to the activities has space available for you to jot down notes or list new activity ideas.

The activities in this handbook are examples of activities done by providers with their special needs children. They are not recipes for are suggested activities to trigger new and fresh ideas. Please remember to reach the "Pre-requisites" which look at what skills the child needs in order to be able to do the activity.

The following is an explanation of the format of the activities.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Area:** | This is the developmental area that is improved by doing the activity. |
| **Pre-requisites:** | These are the skills the child must already have in order to be able to do the activity. |
| **Purpose:** | This is what you want the child to learn from the activity. |
| **Materials:** | These are the tools you will need to be able to do the activity. |
| **Procedures:** | This section lists the steps you take to do the activity. |
| **Suggestions:** | These are tips on how to expand the activity. It gives new ideas, how to carry it to a higher skill level and also how to include other children. |
| **Multicultural tips:** | These are pointers on what ways you can make the activity culturally diversified. |

# Glossary of terms

**attention span:** The amount of time a person can concentrate his attention on things.

**cognitive:** The process of knowing and understanding (thinking).

**delay:** Wide term used to describe when a child has not acquired the skills at the expected time (or age) or with the expected accuracy.

**developmental:** Successive changes during the process of natural growth.

**disability:** A condition which limits the normal development of an individual.

**early intervention:** The process whereby a child is given the needed help, at an early age, in order to minimize any unhealthy patterns of development.

**fine motor:** The use of small muscles such as those used to cut, hold a pencil.

**gross motor:** The use of large muscles such as those used to sit, walk, and run.

**handicapping condition:** A condition that limits the normal development of an individual.

**head control:** The ability to control the position of the head.

**language:** An organized system of codes used by people to communicate.

**language - expressive:** Communicating an idea to another person.

**language - receptive:** Listening and receiving communication from another person.

**motivation:** The impulse to do something or reach a goal.

**self-concept:** How a person perceives himself.

**sequence:** Things happening in a progressive order.

# Areas of development

Child development is the natural process of growth that a child goes through. It can be divided into different areas.

- **Motor Development**; how he/she sits, walks, grasps objects, how he/she moves his/her body from his/her fingers to his/her toes.
- **Language Development**; how he/she communicates through sounds and words and how he/she hears and listens.
- **Cognitive Development**; how a child thinks and solves problems.
- **Self-Help Development**; if a child can dress himself/herself, brush his/her teeth, drink from a bottle or cup.
- **Social/Emotional Development**; how he/she sees himself/herself, if he/she is confident or shy, how he/she relates to others.

# Developmental milestones

**0 - 3 months**

- sleeps a good part of the time
- learns to raise his/her head and maintains head erect
- discovers with his/her eyes a world around him/her
- follows with his/her eyes objects, faces and smiles
- recognizes his/her mother
- grasps objects that you put in his/her hands
- babbles spontaneously

**3 - 6 months**

- holds head and can sit with support for a short time
- begins to reach for objects
- brings objects to his/her mouth
- engages in social exchange and self-expression through facial expressions, gestures and play

**6 - 9 months**

- can sit alone for short times
- looks for hidden object (peek-a-boo)
- lying down; can roll over - face down or face up
- can slide himself/herself to get closer to an object or person
- recognizes family members
- begins to stand with help, holds onto furniture or person
- passes one object from one hand to the other
- can hold little objects between thumb and index finger
- vocalizes various syllables

**9 - 12 months**

- sits alone with control
- is able to stand alone holding on to furniture
- walks with hands held
- repeats a sound he/she had heard
- moves spontaneously to music
- understands a simple command (such as "come," "sit")
- shows curiosity in exploring his environment, looking at, touching and bringing all to his/her mouth

**1 year - 1 year and 5 months**

- walks alone
- piles two or three blocks
- fills a container (puts objects into a container)
- can pronounce 5 to 10 words

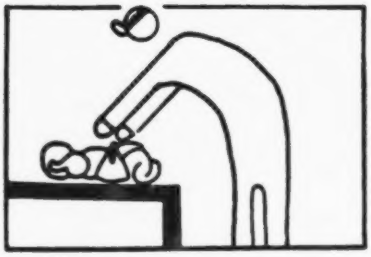
**1 year and 5 months - 2 years**

- goes up and down stairs (with help of a hand - then alone)
- stacks 4 to 6 blocks
- can use two-word sentences (example: "I go")
- learns to eat alone, still messy
- tries to imitate gestures
- plays alongside other child but does not play with child

**2 - 3 years**

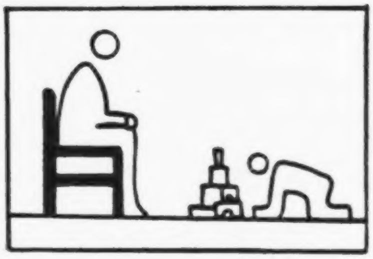
- learns to jump, climb and can hop on one foot
- can stack cubes to form a bridge or can stack up to 10 blocks
- develops language (begin to put words together like "more juice")
- reproduces a circle on paper

# Some of the specialists and what they do



**Pediatrician**

A medical doctor specializing in infants and young children.

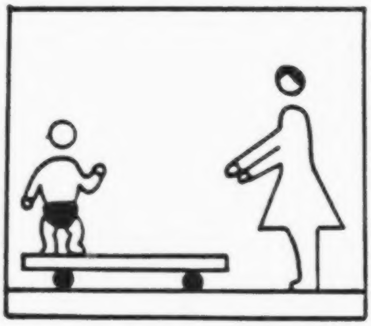


**Child Psychologist**

A trained professional who assesses children using formal and informal tests to determine strengths and weaknesses.

**Neurologist**

A medical doctor specializing in the brain and nervous system.

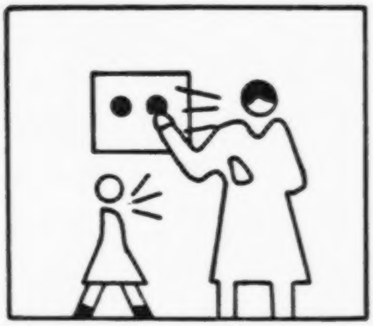


**Physical Therapist**

A professional trained to provide therapy and exercises to aid better movement. (motor)

**Occupational Therapist**

A trained professional that provides therapy through self-care and work and play to enhance motor development.

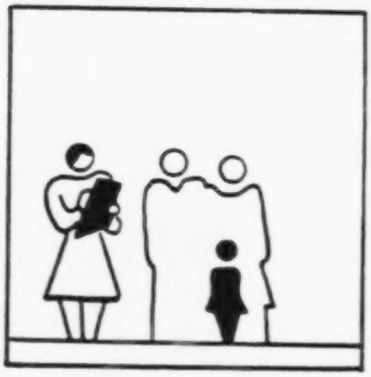


**Speech Therapist**

A trained professional that provides treatment for children with speech problems.

**Special Education Teacher**

A teacher trained to provide education to children with special needs.



**Social Worker**

A professional trained to support families and to aid them in securing assistance within the community.

# Resources

## ACTIVITY BOOKS

*An Invitation to Play: Teachers Guide*. By C. Zieher. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1986.

*Child Learning Through Child Play*. By Ira Gordon, Barry Guinagh, Emile Jester, et. al. St. Martin's Press, 1972.

*Children and Adults*. By Joseph and Laurie Braga. Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1976.

*Creative Food Experiences for Children*. By M. Goodwin and G. Pollen. Day Care and Child Development Council of America.

*I Saw a Purple Cow*. By Ann Cole, Carolyn Haas, Faith Bushnell, and Betty Weinberger. Little, Brown and Company, 1972.

*Mother's Guide to Early Learning*. By Earladeen Badger. PACE, Carmi, Illinois, 1973.

*See What I Can Do!*. By M. Doray. Prentice-Hall.

*You and Your Small Wonder: Activities for Parents and Toddlers on the Go*. By B. Karnes. American Guidance Service, 1982.

## CHILDREN'S BOOKS ON HANDICAPS

*A Cane in Her Hand*. By Ada B. Litchfield. Whitman, Albert, 1977.

*A Special Trade*. By Sally Wittman. Harper and Row, 1978.

*Horses, Airplanes, and Frogs*. By Mark Parker. Child's World, 1977.

*Howie Helps Himself*. By Joan Fassler. Whitman, Albert, 1975.

*I Have a Sister, My Sister is Deaf*. By Jeanne Whitehouse Peterson. Harper and Row, 1977.

*Jennifer Jean the Cross-Eyed Queen*. By Phyllis Naylor. Lerner Publishing Co., 1967.

*Leo the Late Bloomer*. By Robert Kraus. Windermill Books, 1970.

*Like Me*. By Alan Brightman. Little, Brown and Co., 1976.

**BOOKS ON TOYS AND PLAY**

*How to Fill Your Toy Shelves Without Emptying Your Pocketbook*. By The Council for Exceptional Children.

*Play - Children's Business*. By the Association for Childhood Education International.

*Playing It Safe: A Safety Checklist for Children's Toys*. By The National Easter Seal Society for Crippled Children and Adults.

*Toy book*. By S. Caney. Workman Publishing Company.

**OTHER BOOKS**

*Children with Special Needs in Family Day Care Homes: A Handbook for Family Day Care Home Providers*. By Beatrice de la Brosse. Rosemount Center, 1987.

*Communicating with Parents of Exceptional Children: Improving Parent-Teacher Relationships*. By R.L. Kroth. Love Publishing Co., 1975.

*Early Intervention and the Integration of Handicapped and Nonhandicapped Children*. By C. Galloway and P. Chandler. University Park Press, 1978.

*Parent Involvement*. By Nisonger Center, 1976.

*Parents Speakout: Views from the Other Side of the Two Way Mirror*. By H.R. Turnbull and A. Turnbull. Merrill Publishing Co., 1978.

*The Exceptional Child Through Literature*. By Elliot Landau, S. Epstein, and A. Stone. Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1978.

## ORGANIZATIONS

For more information on handicapping conditions you may write to the following organizations.

This Resource listing is from the National Information Center for Handicapped Children and Youth, P.O. Box 1492, Washington, D.C. 20013.

American Council for
the Blind
1211 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Suite 506
Washington, D.C. 20036

American Federation for
the Blind
15 West 16th Street
New York, NY 10011

American Speech-Language-
Hearing Association
10801 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852

Association for Children and
Adults with Learning
Disabilities
4156 Library Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15234

Association for Persons with
Severe Handicaps
7010 Roosevelt Way, N.E.
Seattle, WA 98115

Association for Retarded
Citizens/U.S. National
Headquarters
P.O. Box 6109
2501 Avenue J
Arlington, TX 76011

Association for the Care of
Children's Health
3615 Wisconsin Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20016

Epilepsy Foundation of America
4351 Garden City Drive
Landover, MD 20785

Goodwill Industries of America
9200 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W.
Bethesda, MD 20814

Library of Congress
Division for Blind and
Physically Handicapped
1291 Taylor Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20542

March of Dimes Birth Defects
Foundation
1275 Mamaroneck Avenue
White Plains, NY 10605

Mental Health Association
1800 North Kent Street
Arlington, VA 22209

National Association of
the Deaf
814 Thayer Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

National Easter Seal Society
2023 West Ogden Avenue
Chicago, IL 60612

Council for Exceptional
 Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091

Developmental Disabilities
 Office
U.S. Dept. of Health and
 Human Services
200 Independence Ave., S.W.
Room 338E
Washington, D.C. 20201

Down's Syndrome Congress
1640 West Roosevelt Road
Chicago, IL 60608

National Society for Children
 and Adults with Autism
1234 Mass. Ave., N.W.
Suite 1017
Washington, D.C. 20005

National Spinal Cord Injury
 Association
369 Elliot Street
Newton Upper Falls, MA 02164

Spina Bifida Association
 of America
343 South Dearnborn Street
Suite 319
Chicago, IL 60604

United Cerebral Palsy Assoc.
666 East 34th Street
New York, NY 10016

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Anderson, E. Pick a Title. Baltimore, Maryland: The Maryland State Department of Education, 1986.

Badger, E. Infant/Toddler: Introducing Your Child to the Joy of Learning. Cincinnati, Ohio: McGraw-Hill, 1981.

Carlson, N., & Wandschneider, M. Toward Integrating Young Handicapped Children. East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University, 1979.

Karnes, B. You and Your Small Wonder: Activities for Parents and Toddlers on the Go. Circle Pines, Minnesota: American Guidance Service, 1982.

LaPorta, R., McGee, D., Simmons-Martin, A., Vorce, E., Hippel, C., & Donovan, J. Children with Hearing Impairment. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1978.

Liebergott, J., Favors, A., von Hippel, C.S., & Needleman, H.L. Children with Speech and Language Impairments. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1978.

Murphy, J. Home Care of Handicapped Children: A Guide: hearing impairment. Lyons, Colorado: Carroll. Lutey Publishing, 1982.

Nash, M., & Tate, C. Better Baby Care: A Book for Family Day Care Providers. Washington, D.C.: The Children's Foundation, 1986.

West, K. Family Day-to-Day Care. Mound, Minnesota: Quality Child Care, Inc., 1980.

Zieher, C. An Invitation to Play: Teachers' Guide. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1986.

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